

Small Plant-Based Nutrition Study Results in Weight Loss, Metabolic Health Boosts, and Energy Gains

Joanne Evans, M.Ed., R.N., P.M.H.C.N.S.-B.C., provided a presentation to colleagues at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., about the health benefits of adopting a plant-based vegan diet and soon had 19 nurses eager to test out the science firsthand.

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A plant-based diet helped a group of nurses lose weight, improve cholesterol, and gain energy. (Photo: Business Wire)

After 21 days, 74 percent of the nurses, 14 out of 19, in this self-reported plant-based dietary review lowered their cholesterol, with a mean average of 18 mg/dL, while six lowered their cholesterol by 45 to 60 mg/dL; more than half, 10, lost weight, with an average weight loss of 4.4 pounds, with a range of 1.5 to 9 pounds; 30 percent, six, reported gains in energy; and 41 percent, eight, reported feeling highly satisfied with their health, compared to one nurse who reported this before the dietary modification. After the program concluded, the nurses reported an uptick in fruit and vegetable consumption, while meat and dairy consumption fell. The findings appear in the March 2017 issue of the American Journal of Nursing.

“Large bodies of research show a plant-based vegan diet boosts weight loss, lowers blood pressure, improves cholesterol, and stabilizes blood sugar,” says Neal Barnard, M.D., F.A.C.C., president of the nonprofit Physicians Committee. “We now have preliminary evidence that this way of eating boosts energy. The secret is to stick with the prescription since the health benefits last as long as you’re putting the dietary principles into practice.”

The nurses in the program achieved metabolic benefits without counting calories, measuring

portion sizes, or adhering to strict rules. They received support through weekly webinars with Evans, who answered questions about day-to-day challenges, provided advice about nutrient intake and cooking procedures, and offered feedback about how to integrate options for family and friends into every meal.

Participants could also sign up to receive daily emails from the 21-Day Vegan Kickstart program, a free online meal-planning program that goes live the first day of each month and provides participants with dietitian-created meal plans, grocery shopping lists, inspirational tips, videos of cooking demos and grocery store tours, and a free iPhone app. To sign up for the April 1 program, visit 21DayKickstart.org.

To interview Joanne Evans, M.Ed., R.N., P.M.H.C.N.S.-B.C., Neal Barnard, M.D., F.A.C.C., or a registered dietitian, please contact Jessica Frost at 202-527-7342 or jfrost@pcrm.org.

The Physicians Committee is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1985 by Neal Barnard, M.D., F.A.C.C., that promotes preventive nutrition, conducts clinical research, and encourages higher standards for ethics and effectiveness in research.

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