

# Plant-based diets can remedy chronic diseases

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According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 63 percent of the deaths that occurred in 2008 were attributed to non-communicable chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, Type 2 diabetes and obesity—for which poor diets are contributing factors. Yet people that live in societies that eat healthy, plant-based diets rarely fall victim to these ailments. Research studies have long indicated that a high consumption of plant foods is associated with lower incidents of chronic disease. In the October issue of Food Technology magazine, Senior Writer/Editor Toni Tarver discusses recent discoveries in nutritional genomics that explain how plant-based diets are effective at warding off disease.

The article indicates that [bioactive compounds](#) in plant foods play a role in controlling genetic and other biological factors that lead to chronic disease. For example, antioxidants in plant foods counter free radicals that can cause [chronic inflammation](#) and damage cells. And other plant compounds help control a gene linked to cardiovascular disease and [plaque buildup](#) in arteries and the genes and other cellular components responsible for forming and sustaining tumors.

William W. Li, M.D., President and Medical Director of the Angiogenesis Foundation in Cambridge, Mass., says that all consumers should look at their diets as if food is the medicine necessary to maintain healthy, disease-free lives. "Prevention is always better than a cure," said Li. Foods that may help prevent cancer and other chronic diseases include artichokes, black pepper, cinnamon, garlic, lentils, olives,

pumpkin, rosemary, thyme, watercress, and more. For a more comprehensive list of medicinal foods, read "The Chronic Disease Food Remedy" in the October 2012 issue of Food Technology.

Provided by Institute of Food Science & Technology

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