

Plant-based diets improve cardiometabolic risk factors in diabetes patients

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Plant-based diets improve glycemic control, lead to weight loss, and improve cholesterol in people with type 2 diabetes, according to a new review published in the journal *Clinical Nutrition*.

Researchers reviewed nine [randomized controlled trials](#) that assessed the effectiveness of vegan and vegetarian diets for [diabetes](#) patients. The results show that those who ate a plant-based diet lowered their cholesterol, lost weight, lowered HbA1c levels, and improved other cardiometabolic risk factors when compared to those who ate a nonvegetarian diet.

More than 100 million Americans currently have diabetes or prediabetes. Those with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die from [cardiovascular disease](#) than those who do not have diabetes.

"The link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease is strong. Sixty to seventy percent of people who have type 2 diabetes die of heart disease," says study co-author Hana Kahleova, M.D., Ph.D., director of clinical research at the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. "The good news is that this study shows that the same simple prescription—eating a plant-based diet—can reduce our risk for heart problems and improve type 2 diabetes at the same time."

The study authors suggest that plant-based diets, which center on fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, benefit both [glycemic control](#) and cardiovascular health, because they are low in saturated fat, rich in

phytochemicals, high in fiber, and often rich in low-glycemic fruits and vegetables.

Previous controlled trials and prospective cohort studies have shown that a plant-based dietary pattern is associated with a lower risk of coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular mortality, and all-cause mortality.

More information: Effie Viguiouk et al, Effect Of Vegetarian Dietary Patterns On Cardiometabolic Risk Factors In Diabetes: A Systematic Review And Meta-Analysis Of Randomized Controlled Trials, *Clinical Nutrition* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.clnu.2018.05.032](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2018.05.032)

Provided by Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

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