

# **A major new report has developed a global diet that could improve health and reduce further damage to the planet**

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An international team of researchers, including academics from City, University of London, has developed a new diet it says can improve

health while ensuring sustainable food production.

The EAT-Lancet Commission provides the first scientific targets for a [healthy diet](#) from a [sustainable food production](#) system that operates within planetary boundaries for food.

The report sets out a 'planetary [health](#) diet' which recommends cutting red meat and sugar consumption in half and upping intake of fruits, vegetables and nuts.

The authors say that feeding a growing population of 10 billion people by 2050 with a healthy and sustainable diet will be impossible without transforming eating habits, improving food production, and reducing food waste.

Professor Tim Lang from the Centre for Food Policy at City, University of London is one of the Commissions co-authors:

The food we eat and how we produce it determines the health of people and the planet, and we are currently getting this seriously wrong. We need a significant overhaul, changing the global food system on a scale not seen before in ways appropriate to each country's circumstances.

While this is uncharted policy territory and these problems are not easily fixed, this goal is within reach and there are opportunities to adapt international, local and business policies.

The scientific targets we have devised for a healthy, sustainable diet are an important foundation which will underpin and drive this change.

The EAT-Lancet Commission is a 3-year project that brings together 37 experts from 16 countries with expertise in health, nutrition, environmental sustainability, food systems, economics and political

governance.

Professor Corinna Hawkes, Director of the Centre for Food Policy at City, was also part of the Commission.

## **Planetary health diet**

Unhealthy diets are the leading cause of ill-health worldwide and the report authors say that following the 'planetary health diet' could avoid approximately 11 million premature deaths per year.

The report promotes a [diet](#) consisting of a variety of plant-based foods, with low amounts of animal-based foods, refined grains, highly processed foods, and added sugars, and with unsaturated rather than saturated fats.

Transformation of the global food system is urgently needed as more than 3 billion people are malnourished, including people who are undernourished and overnourished.

The report says that food production is also exceeding planetary boundaries – driving [climate change](#), biodiversity loss, pollution due to over-application of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers, and unsustainable changes in water and land use.

## **Linking health and environmental sustainability**

Human diets inextricably link health and environmental sustainability, and have the potential to nurture both. However, current diets are pushing the Earth beyond its [planetary boundaries](#), while causing ill health. This puts both people and the planet at risk.

To meet the challenge of a growing population, dietary changes must be combined with improved food production and reduced [food](#) waste.

The authors stress that unprecedented global collaboration and commitment will be needed, alongside immediate changes such as refocusing agriculture to produce varied nutrient-rich crops, and increased governance of land and ocean use.

The Commission will take its findings to governments around the world and bodies such as the WHO to see if it can begin to change the way we eat.

The full report is available via the [EAT website](#) and published in *The Lancet*.

**More information:** Walter Willett et al. Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems, *The Lancet* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31788-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31788-4)

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