Are plant-based burgers better for you?

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Plant-based burgers have soared in popularity over the past couple of years. Are these meat alternatives healthier for you than the real thing? Introducing more plant-based foods in your diet is a good thing, says Katherine Zeratsky, a Mayo Clinic registered dietitian nutritionist, but pay attention to the ingredients.

It looks like a burger. It cooks like a burger. Some say it tastes similar to a burger. But is it healthier?

"It really depends on how that plant-based burger is made."

Katherine Zeratsky says the benefit of plant-based burgers usually comes in the form of fiber and other nutrients. But then comes the issue of fat.

"Some plant-based burgers are going to have added fat, and oftentimes, the added fat is a [saturated fat](link)."

Commonly added fats are coconut oil or palm oil. Like with natural meat burgers, saturated fats can be concerning.

"Saturated fat has an association with raising our bad cholesterol, and the concern is that it may increase our heart disease risk."

High sodium and calories also can make a dent in health benefits of a veggie burger. Zeratsky says eating more plant-based foods like vegetables or whole grains is a good approach.

"Just compare products."

Along with added fiber, there's another benefit to a plant-based diet.

"This is an [opportunity](link) to allow someone who enjoys meat to have something that is similar to that, yet is less impactful on the environment."

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