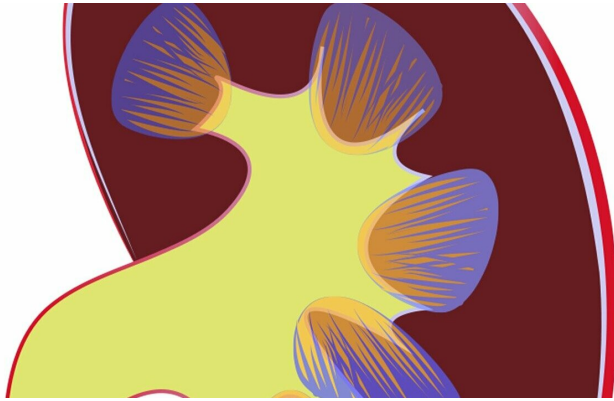


# Following a healthy plant-based diet may lower kidney disease risk

25 April 2019



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A new study has uncovered a link between plant-based diets and kidney health. The finding, which appears in an upcoming issue of *CJASN*, indicates that consuming a diet based on nutrient-rich plants may help protect against the development of chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The consumption of plant-based diets is becoming more common for ethical, environmental, and health reasons. The quality of plant sources of food can differ, however, with nutrient-rich [plants](#) being more healthful and plants that are high in refined carbohydrates being less healthful.

Emerging evidence suggests that the risk of chronic conditions varies by types of plant-based diets. To evaluate the associations between plant-based diets and the development of CKD in a [general population](#), a team led by Hyunju Kim and Casey M. Rebholz, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) analyzed information on 14,686 middle-aged adults enrolled in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities study.

Among the major findings:

- During a median follow-up of 24 years, 4,343 new cases of CKD occurred.
- Participants with the highest [adherence](#) to a healthy plant-based diet had a 14% [lower risk](#) of developing CKD than participants with the lowest adherence to a healthy plant-based diet.
- Participants with the highest adherence to a less healthy plant-based diet had an 11% higher risk of developing CKD than participants with the lowest adherence to a less healthy plant-based diet.
- The association between plant-based diets and CKD risk was especially pronounced for participants who had a [normal weight](#) at the start of the study.
- Higher adherence to an overall plant-based diet and a healthy plant-based diet was associated with slower [kidney](#) function decline.

"For kidney disease risk, it appears to be important to choose healthy options for plant sources of food, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes," said Dr. Rebholz. "Also, our finding of a significant interaction by weight status at baseline suggests that following a healthy eating pattern may be particularly beneficial before becoming overweight or obese."

In an accompanying Patient Voice editorial, Patrick Gee describes his dietary experiences as a person who spent 4.5 years on peritoneal dialysis and is now approximately 2 years into a kidney transplant. He found plant-based diets to be lacking in several areas and has settled on the ketogenic [diet](#), which is very low in carbohydrates, high in fat, and moderate in protein.

**More information:** Plant-Based Diets and Incident CKD and Kidney Function, *CJASN*, [DOI: 10.2215/CJN.12391018](https://doi.org/10.2215/CJN.12391018)

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

APA citation: Following a healthy plant-based diet may lower kidney disease risk (2019, April 25)  
retrieved 16 September 2019 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-healthy-plant-based-diet-kidney-disease.html>

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