Overcoming Nutritional Deficiencies

- **Protein**: growth and maintenance of the body
  - Consume assortment of plant foods to provide all essential and non-essential amino acids
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**: act as an anti-inflammatory agent in the body
  - Eat foods like flaxseed, chia seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, canola oil and soy.
- **Iron**: important for red blood cells and preventing anemia
  - Eat plant sources of iron, such as dark green leafy vegetables, with foods high in vitamin C
- **Zinc**: present in plant foods but better absorbed from animal sources
  - Include foods such as soy products, legumes, grains, cheese and nuts.
- **Calcium**: needed for strong bones and teeth, normal blood clotting and muscle + nerve function.
  - Fruit juices and plant milks fortified with calcium good sources of calcium.
- **Vitamin B12**: necessary for normal blood cell formation and nerve function
  - Consider using a vitamin B12 supplement
- **Vitamin D**: required to absorb calcium during digestion and incorporate calcium into bones and teeth
  - Spend 15 minutes in the sun daily
- **Iodine**: essential component of thyroid hormones
  - Include sea vegetables (kelp, nori, kombu, wakame) and iodized salt

Types of Plant-Based Diets

- **Vegans**: eat only plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, seeds and nuts.
- **Raw vegans**: eat only plant foods, including vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds, legumes, and sprouted grains (75-100% uncooked food).
- **Lacto vegetarians**: eat plant foods as well as dairy products.
- **Lacto ovo vegetarians**: eat plant foods, dairy products and eggs.
Integrating into Your Life

Gradually transition: overhauling your diet overnight will not work
Start with 1-2 meatless days per week
Remind yourself that it gets easier: stick to it and keep learning
It’s what you do consistently over the long-term that makes all the difference.
Remember your why: it’s all about why you started eating a more plant-based diet
Come back to that why if you find yourself struggling to maintain a healthy, plant-based diet.
Stop worrying about protein: eating a balanced diet will give you enough protein
Focus on balanced and whole food plant-based diet
Vegan food is just food: let go of the label “vegan”
Think about all the nourishing, healthy, plant foods you’ll be eating

Meat Substitutes

Tofu: packed with protein and soaks up flavors in the prepared dish
Mushrooms: meaty texture and savory flavor, good source of selenium, vitamin C and iron
Jackfruit: often compared to pulled pork, packed with vitamins and minerals
Beans and Legumes: nutty and earthy in flavor, great source of protein and help digestion because they are packed with fiber

Cooking Plant-Based Basics

Spice it up: incorporate a variety of spices to bring out the flavors
Make Vegetables the star: begin with vegetables then add protein and other components from there

Vegetarian diets have been associated with lower BMI, and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers.

Where is the evidence?

Vegetarians tend to consume fewer overall calories; a lower proportion of calories from fat; and higher quantities of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, soy products, and fiber.
A recent study found that, among vegan to non-vegetarian diets, increased meat consumption corresponded with diabetes prevalence, with 2.9% in vegans to 7.8% in meat consumers (Barnard et al., 2009).
Vegetarians and vegans are typically slimmer than non-vegetarians. These dietary features help promote lower LDL cholesterol levels, better serum glucose control, and reduced risk of chronic diseases (Barnard et al., 2005).
