



THE POWER OF PLANTS:

Adventures in Plant-Based Nutrition



By Emma Levez Larocque, RHN

When you have to make a change for your health: 5 tips



These days it's almost impossible to turn on your computer or look at your

social media without coming across a story of a magnificent health change. Someone who has lost 150 pounds and beat Type 2 Diabetes; someone else who has reversed heart disease and is now running marathons; and even a third person who is keeping cancer at bay because they decided to take matters into their own hands and change their diet and lifestyle. That's the real potential of a healthy, whole foods, plant-based diet and proactive lifestyle changes. Approached honestly and with courage and dedication, these changes have the power to transform – even save – your life, and an increasing number of people are making this connection and taking their health into their own hands.

I love seeing these inspiring stories, and I know other people do as well; however, I think sometimes the fact that they are everywhere makes them seem commonplace, and detracts from the incredible courage it requires to take your health into your own hands, especially at a time of crisis. As anyone who has been faced with the information that they have a major health issue knows, this moment is terrifying. And many people just want someone to tell them what to do – how to fix it, how to get better. Our healthcare system has become so centered around pharmaceuticals that often that fix automatically takes the form of a pill or medication, disregarding all other possible options.

Ironically, this difficult, frightening time is when it's most important for a person NOT to hide and put their life in the hands of others; it's a critical time to stand up and get involved in your own healthcare.

In my life, and my work as a nutritionist, I have observed many reactions from people who have had to face less-than-desirable news about their health. Obviously everyone's situation and health is different, and there is no one perfect answer, nor is there a "proper" way to react. Having said that, I am on a mission to help empower people at this stage in their lives because I have seen the difference it can make when someone feels that there is something THEY can do, no matter how scary it might seem. When someone takes their health into their own hands, the possibility for transformation is incredibly powerful. If you're interested in becoming more proactive about your own wellness (even if you are not in a healthcare crisis at this time), here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Look at your food. What we eat is, literally, what makes up the material our bodies are made from. Fuel your body with nutrient dense, healthy whole plant foods, and stop feeding it with inflammatory, disease-causing fuel, and no matter what your situation, you will be better off. This may not be the whole answer to a health crisis, but you may be surprised at how far it will take you on the path to better health. If this is an area you need to improve on, take a look at pcrm.org (Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine), or nutritionfacts.org for incredible libraries of valuable current health information about the benefits of eating a whole food plant-based diet.

2. Consider your lifestyle. Stress management and exercise are two extremely important factors in health. How are you managing stress on a daily basis? Do you get enough exercise? Are you getting enough quality sleep? If these are areas you are falling short, don't put them on hold any longer. So many people bump along from day to day, just surviving, and when that feels normal, bigger troubles may be just around the corner. All aspects of our health are interconnected in a fine balance. When you are eating well, you will be more likely to feel like exercising, and both of those things will promote better stress management and sleep. Visit www.ornish.com to learn more about the very real health benefits that can come with proactive lifestyle changes.

3. Work with a doctor who is open to alternative therapies, and build yourself a healthcare team. Your doctor is obviously an important health advisor, but there are many other healthcare practitioners who will be valuable contributors to your overall healthcare, and they have different areas of expertise to offer.



Branch out and look around; some therapies may speak to you and your health concern while others may not. Though our health care system is lacking in many ways, the active, engaged health seeker will benefit from the ability to investigate all kinds of alternative therapies – like massage, acupuncture, Chinese medicine, nutritional therapy, meditation, etc. Keep an open mind, have the courage to try some different things and find the ones that best suit you and your situation. Finding a doctor who is willing to support this type of exploration is a huge bonus, so ask that question when you are looking for a doctor.

4. Be willing to do your own research. The more information

you can arm yourself with, the more empowered you will be. If you can engage a family member or friend to help you with this, even better. If there is a local group that can help to support you and provide information, use it. Don't be afraid to draw on those around you for help at this important time – though your role in this is key, you don't have to do it all by yourself.

5. If possible, don't wait until you get sick to become proactive. When people are faced with a health crisis, it often acts as a wake-up call, but as mentioned earlier, this is perhaps one of the most challenging (although it can also be one of the most motivating) times to make a significant shift in your life. However, obviously

becoming proactive about your own health is best – and most easily – done when you are in good health, so get started today!



Emma Levez Larocque is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and a Certified Plant-Based Chef. She has been vegan for 7 years, and veg for more than 20. She is passionate about sharing the benefits of plant-based eating and living with others, and working to make the planet a kinder, more compassionate place for all who share it.

Plant-Based Nutrition: Consulting Services



**Are you struggling to take
control of your health?**

IF:

- You want to eat more plant-based food, but aren't sure how to get started
- You are struggling with low energy, or other nagging health problems that you would like to deal with through diet and lifestyle changes
- You want to learn about how changing your diet and lifestyle can improve your health
- You want to learn how to be a healthy vegan

Book a 1-1 Consultation today



"What I love about being a nutritional consultant is helping people understand that the key to their health is in their own hands. What we fuel our bodies with, how active we are on a daily basis, how we manage stress, and the effort we put into maintaining good mental and emotional health all go a long way to determining our long-term health. It's no magic bullet, but it's good common sense, and it works."

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