

CATEGORY: FOOD, NUTRITION & FOOD ACTION INITIATIVES

Food - Plant-Based Food

Health outcomes are well documented where the consumption of high quality, plant-based diets are linked to a reduced risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's and neurodegenerative disease, cancer, mortality, kidney disease, skin problems, chronic diseases, dental ill-health, and weight issues among other health challenges (Derbyshire, 2017; Chen et al., 2023; Dresler et al., 2022; Carrero et al., 2020; Fam et al., 2022; Hardt et al., 2022; Khalid et al., 2022; Shkempi & Huppertz, 2019; Zhu et al., 2021). The *Food is Medicine Movement* continues to promote strategies for using food in this capacity (The Center for Health Law, 2020; Veldheer et al., 2021). *Produce prescription programs* providing access to fresh nutritious food via partnerships with community & healthcare providers, part of the food is medicine movement, continues to expand (Downer et al., 2022; Everett et al., 2020; National Gardening Association, 2021; National Produce Prescription Collaborative, 2022; Fleming et al., 2022).

Research on plant-based diets has exploded with topics of vegan diets (Fresan et al., 2019), links to mortality (Baden et al., 2019; Herpich et al., 2022), ultra-processed food (UPF) as a public health issue (van Tullemen, 2023), food production landscapes (Burek, 2018), school meals (Cohen et al., 2021), plant-based substitutes for milk and meat (Craig et al., 2023; Van Loo et al., 2020), microbiome role, animal vs. plant proteins (Ferrari et al., 2022; Good, 2024; Hoehnel et al., 2022;), and correlation to mental health (Haghighatdoost et al., 2023; Medawar et al., 2019).

Research on specific plants is expanding the scope of plant-based food linkages to health. These include studies of potatoes (Bailey et al., 2023), ancient grains, Cheng et al., 2018), cereal wheat (Cui et al., 2024), legumes (Cusworth et al., 2021), mushrooms (Deng et al., 2023), alfalfa (Hadidi et al., 2023), chickpea (Heydarirad et al., 2019), pistachios (Higgs et al., 2021), black raspberries (Huang et al., 2020), cactus (Monteiro et al., 2023), broccoli (Nandini et al., 2020), and golden thistle (Sergio et al., 2023).

Consumer driven trends for healthy, local and sustainably grown edible plants have become mainstream and continue to create demand within the green industry and impact food purchase patterns across healthcare, hospitality and educational sectors (Lazaroiu et al., 2019). These have impacted many sectors including business, non-profit groups, food advocacy organizations, health professionals and individuals. Issues like innovative plant products, (soft food for elderly), dietary and nutrition research, regulatory factors, food systems, plant-specific horticulture science, underutilized plants for food/food security and correlations to specific health diagnoses shed light on the intersection and scope of plant-based food and health.

Refer to Resource Hub: Food, Nutrition & Food Action category: nutrition subset; Horticulture Practices category: consumer driven trends & plant-based businesses; Populations and Programs category: cancer for related resources.

Key Organizations

[American Institute for Cancer Research](#)

[Center for Food As Medicine; Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center](#)

[Dept of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences NC State University](#)

[Farm to Cafeteria Canada](#)

[Food is Medicine Coalition](#)

[Institute of Food Technologists](#)
[International Centre for Underutilized Crops](#)
[Nutrition.gov](#)
[Plant Based Foods Association.org](#)
[The Food Institute.com](#)

USDA – US department responsible for agriculture, food, policy <https://www.usda.gov/>
US Food and Drug Administration – a department within US Dept. of Health & Human Services, USDA is responsible for safety & security of the nation’s food supply... dietary supplements” along with other areas.

Books, journals & epublications on plant-based food

[Advances in Food and Nutrition Research Book series](#)

Broad, GM. (2016). *More than just food: Food justice and community change*. University of California Press.

Downer, S., Clippinger, E., Kummer, C., Hager, K., & Acosta, V. (2022). [Food is medicine research action plan](#). Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation.

FAO. IFAD. UNICEF. WFP. WHO. (2023). [The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2023](#). Food and Agriculture Organization; Rome, Italy.

[Foods journal](#)

[Food Production, Processing and Nutrition journal](#)

[International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#)

[Plant Foods for Human Nutrition journal](#)

Smith, B.J. (2023). *Food power politics: The food story of the Mississippi civil rights movement*. The University of North Carolina Press.

The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School. (2020). [Food is medicine: Peer-reviewed research in the U.S.](#)

[USDA My Plate](#)

[USDA Food and Nutrition](#)

van Tulleken, C. (2023). *Ultra-processed people: Why do we all eat stuff that isn't food... and why can't we stop?* Waterstones.

Research & articles on plant-based food

Recently published selected research & articles:

Ahnen, R.T., Jonnalagadda, S.S., & Slavin, J.L. (2019). Role of plant protein in nutrition, wellness, and health. *Nutr Rev.*, 77(11), 735-747.

Alcorta, A., Porta, A., Tárrega, A., Alvarez, M.D., & Vaquero, M.P. (2021). Foods for plant-based diets: Challenges and innovations. *Foods*, 10(2), 293.

Antoniussen, C.S., Rasmussen, H.H., Holst, M., & Lauridsen, C. (2021). Reducing disease activity of inflammatory bowel disease by consumption of plant-based foods and nutrients. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 8, 733433.

Baden, MY., Liu, G., Satija, A., Li, Y. et al. (2019, Sept). Changes in plant-based diet quality and total and cause-specific mortality. *Circulation*, 140(12), 979-991.

Bailey, T., Franczyk, AJ., Goldberg, EM., & House, JD. (2023). Impact of cooking on the protein quality of Russet potatoes. *Food Sci Nutr.*, 11(12), 8131-8142.

Bazerghi, C., McKay, F.H., & Dunn, M. (2016). The role of food banks in addressing food insecurity: A systematic review. *J Community Health*, 41(4), 732-40.

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- Chen, X., Maguire, B., Brodaty, H., & O'Leary, F. (2019). Dietary patterns and cognitive health in older adults: A systematic review. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 67(2), 583-619.
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Examples of plant-based food programming

Grow food in urban small spaces – urban gardening using containers, grow bags, portable pots. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qloF9kT9Zs>

H.E.A.R.T Village in Lake Wales Fl. transforms sandy plot into a thriving food production site. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmkgbS8RQ2k>

Suprmarkt low cost organic grocery servicing low income communities in Los Angeles. SNAP accepted, nutrition focused, offering a solution to food and nutrition insecurity.

<https://suprmarkt.la/>

Wolfing Down Food Science podcasts explore how food moves from farm to tables, with food science an important factor in production and consumption.

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1609819>

2 Acre Tropical Food Forest Project: Start to Finish using permaculture principles in Ft. Myers, FL.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Zy5i8-mfAA>

Videos, webinars & websites on plant-based food

American Institute for Cancer Research website's Foods that Fight Cancer provides scientific information.

<https://www.aicr.org/cancer-prevention/food-facts/>

Centre for Underutilized Crops, based in Europe, promotes the understanding, research, advocacy, and use of wild or semi-wild species with crop-like traits to address food security, deforestation and climate change challenges.

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/cuc/about/index.page>

Columbia Medical Center shares insights into plant-based diets on its website.

<https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/what-plant-based-diet-and-it-healthy>

Food Systems presented by David Outerbridge, Florida Extension explores what food systems are, who are the stakeholders & issues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDP6YClSiNA&list=PLSbjM6uOsj-kK6wyMnrBG3OtS1d8L-QoP&index=2>

Michigan Medicine. (2015). *Plant-based food diets and cancer*. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVoO6QAkZJg>

New research on plant-based diets and mortality from Healthcare Triage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvnLjWXw21s>

Plants for Human Health Institute offers articles related to this topic.

<https://plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/2020/01/15/starting-the-year-off-with-a-bam/>

Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database (THAD) activities with a nutrition focus include planting pea shoots, celery seeds & crowns, eating plant parts, kitchen waste: regrow avocado seeds.

<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/activities-a-to-z-list/>

Whole Kids Foundation Whole Kids' Top 10 recipes and Activities from 2023: honey oat cups, baked veggie nuggets, broccoli stem slaw, cauliflower gnocchi & eat a rainbow, make the honey swap.

<https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/blog/whole-kids-top-10-recipes-and-activities-from-2023/>

Related organizations

[Plant Based Foods Association](#)

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