



The No-Recipe Guide
to Plant-Based Eating

by Karen K. Little

Chapter 5

Eating!

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Eating!

How to eat no matter what we eat

Eating is a natural activity that everyone knows how to do. This means that starting a whole-food, plant-based diet should be easy because we all know how to accomplish its major activity!

Benefits to adopting a whole-food, plant-based dietary lifestyle are that you will more than likely eliminate indigestion, lose weight, increase energy, and depending on your goals, become noticeably healthier. And that is just the start!

Eliminating indigestion alone should be enough to embrace the idea of reducing or eliminating meat and dairy products from your diet. Indigestion, which is also called *dyspepsia*, is a disease of the gastrointestinal organs that can trigger a lot of other diseases.

Many of us spend days feeling not quite well after eating, brushing it off as “oh, it’s what I just ate – nothing serious!” Well, indigestion points to the development of other chronic diseases, such as ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, abdominal wall hernias, gallstones, pancreatitis, chronic gastritis, constipation, and continual stomach discomfort, to name a few things.

Note: For statistical information on what ails us, visit the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) web page on the subject.

This chapter discusses some simple eating habit adjustments you and your friends can make whether you adopt a plant-based lifestyle or not. Here you’ll learn why it is important to:

- Eat when you are hungry (and not stick to three-squares a day)
- Eat satisfying food (and avoid eating because you are feeling uncomfortable)
- Eat digestible foods (and make sure what goes in comes out in the least amount of time)
- Eat a realistic volume of food (and check that it doesn’t stretch your stomach into an unsightly bulge)



Eat when hungry

What causes obesity? Obesity is our response to feeling digestively uncomfortable in a society where food availability is plentiful. We are also up against social rules that suggest overeating is required for relaxation, holidays, and dining out. Possibly the worst societal dictate that results in ruined health is that we should eat three meals a day. If we give up that one dictate alone, the urge to overeat might become passé.

Over-eating disturbs our digestive system and makes us uncomfortable. Because we usually feel good when we begin to eat, many of us eat more than we need, hoping to return to that initial “feel good” state during the course of eating too much. This response to food is similar to the way that drug addicts always seek the comfort of that first hit long after that feeling ceased to exist.

In alcoholism, drinking too much is called taking “the hair of the dog that bit you,” where it is thought that one more drink will cure you from the ills of a hang-over. In the case of overeating, the more we eat to feel better (for whatever reason), the more uncomfortable we become.

Society suggests that we eat three meals per day. The time span between meal periods, however, is between five to six hours and during least a third of this period, we feel hungry. This leads to feelings of starvation which prods us to snack or overeat before sitting down at the table.

When we eat a reasonable amount of food, our stomach empties in about two hours. As it empties, we begin to feel hungry, and in three to four hours, we often feel very hungry and look for a *snack*.

Example: Natural Versus Socially-Mandated Dining Periods

Natural hunger cycles every 4 hours, starting at
7:00 . . . 11:00 . . . 2.30 . . 6:00

Socially recommended 3 meals a day, starting at
7:00 . . ○ . 12:00 . . ○ . . 6:00

The 3 meal a day social plan can become 5 meals a day when you count snacks (red circles), and maybe 6 if you snack in the evening.

Five to six hours is too long to wait for substantial nourishment, so in the middle of those periods, many of us grab candy, chips, bakery, burgers, fries, or slices of pizza, plus soda, all of which contribute to our daily calorie count and indigestion.

The demands of our jobs and commutes require that we nourish ourselves regularly to stay alert. Society’s suggested three-meals-a-day schedule drives many of us to distraction, if not illness and obesity. Food is available through vending machines and fast food counters. Unfortunately, nourishment is not easily available in these ways, while excessive calories and indigestion are.

Eat satisfying food

[Dr. John McDougall](#) is well known for his strict nutritional advice and advocacy for a vegan lifestyle (which you may or may not adhere to). He did, however, shed light on how to create comforting and digestible meals.

He recommends eating a non-refined starch (free of fats, salt and sugar) as the center of any meal, large or small, coupled with non-starchy vegetables and/or fruit. A small meal, of course, is a *snack*, not a license to eat silly stuff.

For weight loss, according to Dr. McDougall, who promotes a pure plant-based dining style, make plant-based starches at least 50% of a meal volume that includes veggies and/or fruit. For weight maintenance, make starches around 70% of the whole.



Note: Non-plant-based eaters take note. Even if you eat meat, do not center your meal around it. Greatly reduce its volume and regard meat as a *small side*, not the meal's main attraction.

According to a December 2017 article by Maria Rodale in the Huffington Post entitled [Eat Starch, Lose Weight](#), Dr. McDougall's view is summarized as:

“Satisfying the appetite begins with filling the stomach. Compared to cheese (4 calories per gram), meat (4 calories per gram), and oils (9 calories per gram), starches contribute only about 1 calorie per gram. They help you to feel full for just a quarter of the calories in cheese and meat, and one-ninth of those in oil.”

Whole-food, plant-based starches include whole grains (such as oatmeal), potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, beans, non-refined noodles or breads, and brown rice. Non-whole-food starches include refined breads and noodles, which are not included in this dietary model.

Starchy, whole foods, in combination with veggies and/or fruit, are quickly digested in the stomach and within a few hours thereafter, eliminated through the colon. Add flax seeds and nuts to the mix, and the process speeds up considerably. You will poop daily, if not after almost every meal.

Under all circumstances, no matter what dietary scheme you adopt, when you eat, your objective is to feel *normal*, not bloated, tired, or with acid lurching into your esophagus. If the food you eat makes you feel even slightly ill, acknowledge how it made you feel and do not repeat eating it again.

Eat digestible foods

The key to eating satisfaction is how well our digestive system functions. This means whatever we eat goes in, is processed efficiently, then is eliminated within 24 hours or less. Plant-based foods do just that. If we do not poop at least once a day, waste material packs our intestines and digestive problems result in:

- Hard stools
- Indigestion
- Bloating
- Gas
- Appetite loss
- Belly pressure

Search the web using the phrase “*symptoms of hard stools*” or quickly check the article entitled *Constipation* on MedBroadcast.com for additional information.

Being in the habit of eating satisfying, whole, plant-based foods aids digestion, and better health. What food goes in your body needs to come out within a reasonable amount of time. If not, you face indigestion, bloating, or possibly, a lot of unexpected farting.

Tip: To aid the flow of “out,” sit on the *front edge* of a toilet seat so you keep the “out” opening free from being sealed up by the back. Under all conditions, do not use a toilet seat as a lounge.

Eat a realistic volume

The picture to the right shows a single portion of food served in a popular restaurant. Considering the volume of food, most diners would bring home half.

While the amount of food an adult stomach holds varies by individual, *reasonable* is regarded to be between three to four cups of food. The maximum an average stomach can hold is around 16 cups (a gallon), but not comfortably.

This is what happens when you overeat:

- Your stomach stretches and pushes against other organs, causing discomfort.
- Overeating makes the heart rate accelerate. This can make us feel hot and sweaty, plus puts us at risk for heart disease (or failure).
- When our digestive juices mix with swallowed air, belching occurs.
- The pressure from overeating causes the stomach to produce excess hydrochloric acid that can press upward into your esophagus, causing burning and the need for antacids.



- This same pressure can cause undigested food to flow into your intestines, producing peptide tyrosine-tyrosine (PYY) and a queasy, nauseous feeling.
- If too much undigested food enters your intestines, diarrhea and stomach pain follows.

By eating every 3- to 4-hours, and formulating meals, large and small, around plant-based starches, you will feel comfortably fed and less likely to stuff yourself with more than you need.

How much food should be on your plate to keep from gaining weight? Think of the amount of a large meal comprised of a plant-based starch, plus vegetables and/or fruit, as being approximately 1.5-to-2 fists in volume. The amount measured in one fist, then, makes for a pleasant light meal.

Note: For more information, do a web search on the phrase “[*effect of overeating*](#).” Overeating might be the most serious addiction our affluent society has, culminating in painful and sometimes deadly results.

The good thing about a food abundance is that we do not have to fear starvation. The bad is that it leads to eating ourselves sick.

When presented with too much food to eat at one setting, get in the habit of saving the remainder for another meal or dispose of it without shame.

Whether your food is eaten or not, ultimately, it still will become garbage. Make sure that your intestines don't become the dump.



Summary

- Eat whole foods when hungry, generally every three to four hours.
- Eat satisfying foods, such as plant starches, along with other veggies and fruits, that satiate hunger and leave you feeling good.
- If you have reduced, but not eliminated, meat and dairy, regard them as a small *side* to a meal that features a plant-based starch, such as a potato or grains, followed by vegetables and/or fruit.
- Eat digestible, plant-based foods that promptly enter and leave your digestive system.
- And eat enough food at a session to feel satisfied but not stuffed, knowing that you can eat more food within three to four hours.
- By approximate size, a large meal comprised of a plant-based starch, plus vegetables and/or fruit, would be approximately 1.5-to-2 fists in volume, and a snack with similar makeup, about one fist.
- If the food you eat makes you feel even slightly ill, acknowledge how you feel and do not eat it (or a similar quantity of it) again.

What's Next?

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the whole-food, plant-based eating style.

Chapter 2 re-introduces you to grocery shopping for whole-food, plant-based eaters.

Chapter 3 recommends kitchen tools most suitable for preparing whole-food, plant-based meals.

Chapter 4 shows you how to prepare foods for your whole-food, plant-based diet.

Chapter 5 regards good eating practices.

Chapter 6 suggests many things to eat that do not need recipes.

Chapter 7 examines weight loss behavior and easy exercises.

Chapter 8 summarizes the links provided throughout this book, plus related information.



The first three chapters of *The No-recipe Guide to Plant-Based Eating* were published on January 25, 2018 as individual PDF files, with the remaining chapters to be published as PDF files on or about May 31. Feel free to share these files!

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