



GS5

GROCERY SHOPPING

# The Power of Plant-Based Eating

*Time: 70 Minutes*

Eating a plant-based, meatless meal a few times a week can lower your cholesterol and improve your heart health. Meatless meals are better for your health, the planet and your budget. They're a great way to help you increase your servings of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and nuts.

## OBJECTIVES:

Name three health benefits of meatless meals.

Identify three sources of plant-based protein.

Create a weekly meal plan for dinners, including two meatless options.

## SETUP

- Review the resource list and print it out.
- Set up demo station with the necessary activity resources.
- Provide computer, internet access and projector, if available.

## INTRO (10 Minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Ask the participants if they have tried making or serving meatless/vegetarian meals for dinner. What was the response from their families? What did they like or not like?  
**(Give everyone a chance to speak.)**

## LESSON (30 Minutes)

- Play video(s) and present content (see demo script).

## ACTIVITY (20 Minutes)

- Participants will explore meatless recipes and create their own weekly meal plan and grocery list, including two meatless meals.

## GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (10 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#). Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.)



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans.

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# The Power of Plant-Based Eating Resource List

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## HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or [heart.org/healthyforgood](http://heart.org/healthyforgood)

- Article – [Vegetarian, Vegan and Meals Without Meat](#)
- Article – [How Does Plant-Forward \(Plant-Based\) Eating Benefit Your Health?](#)
- Article – [The Benefits of Beans and Legumes](#)
- Article – [Types of Whole Grains](#)
- Video – [How to Cook Dried Beans](#)
- Video – [Linguine with Cannellini Beans and Summer Squash](#)

Find these resources in this lesson

- Recipe – [Linguine with Cannellini Beans and Summer Squash](#)
- Handout – [Plant-Based Protein Sources](#)
- Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

## SPACE SETUP

- Chairs for participants
- Demo table
- Computer, internet access, and projector, if available

## ACTIVITY SUPPLIES\*

- Blank sheets of lined paper (a few per person)
- Pens or pencils
- Folders

Printed recipes from [heart.org/recipes](http://heart.org/recipes) (optional)

- Whole-grain linguine
- Olive oil
- ½ small red onion
- 1 small zucchini
- 1 small yellow summer squash
- 15.5 ounce canned cannellini beans
- 1 large tomato
- Fresh basil
- Balsamic vinegar
- Sweet paprika
- Salt and pepper
- (OPTIONAL) ¼ cup shredded or grated Parmesan cheese

\*Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies.

# The Power of Plant-Based Eating Demo Script



## SAY:

You may have heard the terms “vegan,” “plant-based” or “plant-forward” and wondered what they mean. Today we’re going to talk about the many benefits of a plant-based eating style for our health, not to mention the health of the planet!

## WHAT IS PLANT-BASED EATING?

- First, let’s define the terms:
- A vegan diet is entirely plant-based. It excludes meat, fish, dairy and eggs – basically anything that comes from an animal.
- Vegetarians also eat a plant-based diet but may also include dairy and eggs.
- A flexitarian is a vegetarian that sometimes eats meat, poultry or fish but mostly sticks to plant foods.
- Plant-forward is a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes plant-based foods but is not strictly limited to them. Meat may be included but it’s usually not the main feature of the meal.

## BENEFITS OF PLANT-BASED MEALS

- Whether you’re considering eating less meat or giving it up entirely, the benefits are clear: less risk of disease and improved health and well-being.
- Specifically, eating less meat decreases the risk of:
  - Heart disease
  - Stroke
  - Overweight and obesity
  - High blood pressure
  - High cholesterol
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Many cancers
- Meat is often loaded with cholesterol and saturated fat, which contribute to poor heart health. And processed meats like deli meat, bacon and sausage often have too much sodium as well.

Vegetables, fruits, beans and legumes tend to be lower in calories and higher in fiber, which will help you feel full. Adding them to your eating plan can help you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

If you choose to keep animal-based proteins in your diet, lean meats, skinless poultry and fish are good sources of healthier protein.

Whichever diet you choose, just remember that losing the meat doesn’t have to mean losing protein. There are plenty of plant foods that can fill the bill, like tofu, quinoa, tempeh, mushrooms, lentils, chickpeas, nut butters, some veggie burgers, and most beans and legumes.

And did you know there are many good vegetable sources of protein? Artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, collards, corn, potatoes, peppers, spinach, sweet potatoes and turnip greens are just a few veggies that provide a good amount of protein. In fact, every plant we eat has some protein in it. So, you may be getting enough protein without meat.

Now let’s take a look at a simple, versatile and very budget-friendly plant-based recipe.

**Play [recipe video](#) (or demonstrate, time permitting):  
Linguine with Cannellini Beans and Summer Squash**


## NOT ALL PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE HEALTHY

A meatless meal doesn’t automatically translate to a healthier meal. Make sure you don’t just replace the meat with highly processed meat substitutes, refined carbohydrates or deep-fried veggies, also known as “vegan junk food.” The key is adding high-quality, nutrient-dense plant-based foods.


One study showed that eating primarily high-quality plant foods (like vegetables, fruits, whole grains and nuts) was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease than eating primarily lower-quality plant foods (like fruit juices, refined grains, potatoes and sweets).

## The Power of Plant-Based Eating Demo Script (Continued)

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 The researchers found that even if you've eaten a poor diet for half your life, adding more healthy plant foods as an adult can help reduce your risk.

### HOW TO ADD MEATLESS MEALS


 Going meatless is as simple as moving vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and legumes from a side dish to a starring role. These foods tend to be high in fiber, vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients.


### Pass out Plant-Based Proteins handout.



#### **SAY:**

It's easy to find lots of plant-based sources of protein at the grocery store. Just look at all these options!

 An easy way to get started is to add one or two meatless meals each week. Then add on from there. Sticking with it can quickly make you start feeling lighter and your wallet fatter: People who eat less meat tend to consume fewer calories, and foods such as beans are one of the most cost-effective sources of protein available. Meat typically costs more per pound than other protein sources.

 Dried beans are very inexpensive and easy to store and cook. Let's learn how.

**Play video:** [How to Cook Dried Beans](#)

## The Power of Plant-Based Eating Activity Script

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Pass out paper and pens. Participants will write a daily meal plan for dinners, including at least two meatless meals, and a grocery list for the week.

At the demo station, have available some printed AHA recipes as well as AHA cookbooks and other resources for plant-based recipes.

Invite participants to use these resources and also search [Healthy for Good Recipes](#) for ideas.



**SAY:**

Plan as many dinner meals as you have time for this week and be sure to include at least two meatless dinner options. Make a grocery list with all of the necessary ingredients. Remember you may be able to use leftovers on one or more days.

Once all participants have finished filling out their weekly meal plan and grocery list, invite them to share with the people around them.

## Linguine with Cannellini Beans and Summer Squash

Makes 4 servings; 2 cups per serving  
Per serving: 346 Calories, 1.0 g Saturated Fat, 272 mg Sodium



### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces dried, whole-grain linguine
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ small red onion (thinly sliced)
- 1 small zucchini, halved, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 small yellow summer squash, halved, thinly sliced crosswise
- 2 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 15.5 ounce canned cannellini beans (drained, rinsed)
- 1 large tomato (chopped)
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon sweet paprika
- ¼ cup shredded or grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the pasta using the package directions, omitting the salt. Drain well in a colander.
2. Meanwhile, in a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the onion for 3 to 4 minutes, or until tender-crisp.
3. Stir in the squash, zucchini, water and pepper. Cook for 6 to 8 minutes, or until the squashes are tender-crisp, stirring occasionally.
4. Stir in the beans, tomato, basil and vinegar. Cook for 3 minutes, or until heated through, stirring occasionally. Stir in the salt.
5. Serve the bean mixture over the pasta. Sprinkle with the paprika and Parmesan if desired. (Omit Parmesan for a dairy-free or vegan meal.)

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# Plant-Based Protein Sources

It's easy to find plant-based sources of protein at the grocery store. Just look at all these options! These foods also tend to be high in fiber, vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients.

			
Beans	Broccoli	Chickpeas	Greens
			
Lentils	Nut Butter	Nuts and Seeds	Peas
			
Potatoes	Quinoa	Seaweed	Soy milk
			
Spinach	Tempeh	Tofu	Veggie Patties

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## **SPECIFIC**

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

## **MEASURABLE**

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

## **ACHIEVABLE**

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

## **REALISTIC**

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

## **TIME-BOUND**

- When will your goal be achieved?

## **EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:**

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:

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