Sustainable Plant-Based Eating Guide

What is Plant-Based Eating?
- A plant-based diet is a diet consisting mostly or totally of plant-based foods.
- A plant-based diet either limits or removes animal-based foods such as meat, poultry, fish, and dairy.
- Examples of Plant-Based Diets include:
    - Vegan – A diet that excludes all types of animal-based foods.
    - Vegetarian – A diet that excludes all types of meat, poultry, fish, and seafood. This diet may include eggs and dairy.
    - Pescatarian – A diet that excludes all types of meat and poultry but includes fish and seafood.
    - "Flexitarian" – A semi-vegetarian diet that emphasizes plant-based foods with occasional intake of meat.

Potential Benefits:
- Lowers risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and many types of cancers.
- Improves the quality of your diet.
- Boosts immune system and helps with maintaining a healthy weight.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation.
- Reduces land and water used for food production.

Tips for reducing food waste and eating a plant-based diet:
- Learn to cook from scratch. Ask your PACT dietitian if your facility has a Healthy Teaching Kitchen.
- Plan meals ahead of time and buy only what you need to help decrease food waste.
- Opt for vegetables, whole grains, and nuts instead of replacing meats with highly processed substitutes.
- Start slow! Try a meatless meal once a week, then add more days as you get more used to it.
- Choose ingredients and flavors that you know you and your family will enjoy.
- Ask your dietitian for ideas on how to purchase food from local sources and cook to improve your home kitchen sustainability.

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Plant-Based Proteins

When limiting or eliminating animal-based foods, be sure to include plant-based sources of protein such as:

- Quinoa
- Tofu, Tempeh, and Edamame
- Lentils
- Beans

- Nuts and Nut Butters
- Seeds
- Seitan
- Hummus

- Eat more dried beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy
- Eat less red meat, cheese, milk and seafood
- Eat sustainably produced seafood

- Choose organic and locally produced fruits and vegetables
- Eat seasonally

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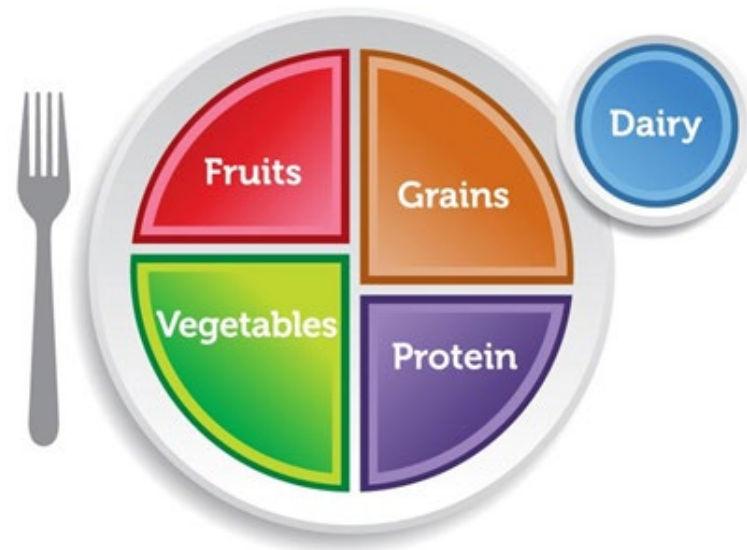
<h1 style="text-align:center">For More Information:</h1>

1. **Choose Seafood Wisely** || [Fish Watch](#) and
   [NOAA Fisheries](#)
   Overfishing causes species loss raising concern about a sustainable seafood supply. Seafood farming is undergoing expansion and change. For now, consumers can choose sustainable species using the above guide.

2. **Go Meatless on Mondays** ||[Choose My Plate/Vegetarian](#)
   Red meat farming uses the most land and water compared to other proteins. Dried beans, peas, lentils, nuts, soy and eggs are healthy proteins that are environmentally friendly. MyPlate offers many tips and recipes to help you get started with eating plant based.

3. **Purchase Organic Foods More Often** ||[USDA Organic Agriculture](#)
   Organic farms improve soil quality and fertility and reduce chemicals and drugs in our food supply and environment. Organic pork and poultry have less antibiotic resistant bacteria.

4. **Eat Seasonal Produce** || [USDA Seasonal Produce](#)
   Eating locally grown produce decreases carbon emissions by reducing transportation miles. Pay attention to where produce is grown and shop at your local farmers market. SNAP is now accepted by many farmers markets.

5. **Learn to cook** || [VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen](#)
   Learning to cook is your best bet for eating sustainably. A few basic skills make tasty meals at home simple. Many VA hospitals and Community Based Outpatient Clinics now offer cooking classes. Contact your local VA Nutrition Department for more information.

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