BENEFITS OF A WFPD DIET PATTERN

Obesity and hypertension
Compared to omnivores, more likely to have normal BMI and a lower BP. WFPD diet low in salt, can be as effective as medication in lowering BP (3,4).

Cardiovascular disease (CVD)
30% ↓ in CVD mortality (5). WFPD can arrest and reverse atherosclerosis (6).

Cancer
15% ↓ in cancer incidence and may improve survival after a cancer diagnosis (24,7). Mechanisms include lowering IGFI, avoidance of haem iron and ↓ generation of carcinogens. The WCRF recommends a diet consisting of predominantly plant foods (7). A WFPD diet may reverse early stages of cancer (8).

Type 2 diabetes
60% ↓ risk compared to omnivores (3). In those with diabetes, a WFPD diet improves glycaemic control better than standard approaches and can even reverse the disease and improve end organ damage (9).

Non-alcoholic fatty liver
21% ↓ risk plant-based diets. NAFL is strongly associated with obesity, insulin resistance, diabetes and CVD, (22).

Dementia
Shares the same risk factors as CVD, which are improved or avoided with a WFPD diet. Healthy lifestyles could prevent a third of cases (21).

Improved longevity
Those eating predominantly plants, live longer and healthier (10). WFPD diet ↑ telomere length, which protects DNA (19).

Emotional & mental well-being
WFPD promotes a healthy gut microbiome. These friendly bacteria produce unique chemicals (SCFA) that act in the brain and provide a sense of well-being (17,23).

Improves fitness
Phytochemicals and antioxidants reduces inflammation and promotes faster recovery times and pre-training fitness (20).

NOTABLE NUTRIENTS (11)

Fibre
Abundant in a WFPD diet, promoting a healthy gut microbiome, improving satiety, ↓ cholesterol, ↓ cancer.

Vitamin B12
Not made by plants or animals but microorganisms. Deficiency is an issue for all dietary patterns. Supplementation is required on a WFPD diet (tablet or fortified foods).

Calcium & vitamin D
Calcium is easily obtained from plant sources, including greens, beans, fortified foods. No negative effect on bone health if dairy is avoided. Vitamin D is mainly made by the action of the sun on skin. A supplement is recommended for all during the winter months.

Omega-3 fatty acids
Plant sources include algae, walnuts, flax seeds, hemp seeds, chia seeds and soya beans. This avoids the pollutants in fish, such as mercury, dioxins, PCBs.

Iron
Iron stores may be lower but will not be associated with deficiency. The avoidance of haem iron is beneficial given its role in cancer, diabetes and CVD.

Iodine, zinc & selenium
Iodised salt and seaweed provide iodine, which is needed in moderation. Phytates in grains and beans can reduce zinc absorption, however, soaking, fermenting and sprouting can increase absorption. Good sources of zinc are tempah and nise, nuts and seeds. Selenium is found in grains, seeds and nuts. Just two brazil nuts will provide your daily requirement.

CAUTION ON DIETS HIGH IN ANIMAL-DERIVED FOODS, INCLUDING LOW CARB HIGH FAT AND KETOGENIC DIETS

Processed and red meat cause 20% of colorectal cancer and increase the risk of pancreatic, lung, oesophageal and nasopharyngeal and stomach cancers (7).

Carnitine and choline in meat and eggs are converted to TMAO, which is implicated in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis (13).

Increases insulin resistance, dyslipidaemia and inflammation (14).

Restricts whole-grains, which have been associated with reduced risk of diabetes, CVD and cancer (7,14).

Increase risk of inflammatory bowel disease and autoimmune diseases (15).

Promotes antibiotic-resistant infection (16).

Decreases life expectancy (12).