

Improve your health and Earth's with the Veganuary challenge

By Lisa Wade,
Plant-Based Advocates

It has been a strange year full of difficulties for all of us. Some have suffered more than others, but we have all had to grapple with changes to our lives as a result of the coronavirus. We have also endured weather conditions stemming from or exacerbated by climate change. We have seen devastating hurricanes hit the East Coast, and we have endured the most extreme wildfire season in hundreds of years. It is easy to feel helpless; however, there is hope. There are steps we can take to improve our own health and the health of our planet.

We all know that comorbidities such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and asthma make us more vulnerable to the coronavirus. Fortunately, a simple shift away from animal products—such as meat, dairy, fish and eggs—and towards plant foods can help us address these health issues and a whole lot more.

Reducing our reliance on these products and replacing some of our meat and dairy with plant dishes can have a huge impact on our health. Shifting away from animal products is also critical for the health of the planet,

because raising animals takes a lot more land and resources than growing plants for food.

Research from Oxford University shows that without meat and dairy consumption, global farmland use could be reduced by more than 75 percent—an area as large as the continent of Africa—and still feed the world. According to Oxford, eating a plant-based diet is the most powerful step an individual can take to protect our planet.

I always enjoy this time of year with its promise of new beginnings. This is especially true this year, because even though we still have struggles ahead, there is so much we can do to improve our lives and our world.

As many of us contemplate the brand new year and perhaps even make some resolutions, I'd like to suggest a healthy-eating resolution. Many of us know the reasons for shifting to a more plant-based diet, but may not know where to start. What should we eat instead? How do we make sure we are getting all the nutrients we need? What are the best plant-based meat and dairy alternatives?

These are easily-answered questions if you have someone to show you the ropes. That is why I am so excited to introduce Veganuary, a plant-based

challenge for the month of January (and beyond for those who want to keep going).

Veganuary began in the United Kingdom in 2014 and expanded to the United States in 2020. The program has assisted more than a million people in 192 countries. Veganuary gives people the tools and support they need to successfully implement the shift to a plant-based diet, and the best part is that it's totally free!

Like me, perhaps you have made and broken countless New Year's resolutions. Veganuary provides you with a safety net. They will hold your hand and guide you through the month, providing free recipes, meal plans and support. In addition, you'll get guides to vegan nutrition, grocery shopping tips and meat and dairy substitute recommendations. You can even ask questions on their private Facebook page.

Although most sign-ups occur during the month of January, you can actually sign up at any time of the year. The idea is to try eating plant-based for just one month. Many people reap such tremendous benefits they end up continuing the program throughout the year.

There is so much we can do to improve our lives and health. I



Lisa Wade feeding turkeys at Clorofil, a micro-sanctuary for farmed animals in Los Altos.
Photo courtesy of Lisa Wade

know from personal experience how powerful and transformational a plant-based diet can be. If you are ready to feel empowered and bring some new positivity into your life, I highly encourage you to take advantage of this fabulous free resource and sign up for Veganuary. Whether you adopt a fully vegan diet for a month or just try incorporating some of the healthy recipes into your life, you won't regret taking this positive and health-affirming step.

For more information and to sign up visit www.veganuary.com.

Find out more about Plant-Based Advocates at www.plantbasedadvocates.com and join our contact list if you'd like to stay posted on events and information. You can also Like our Facebook pages: Plant-Based Advocates - Los Gatos and Plant-based Friends.

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