

## Moving to a Plant-Based Diet

### Why we care

The food choices we make can have as much impact on the environment as our transportation choices. Switching from an average car to a hybrid might save a little over a ton of carbon dioxide equivalents per person per year, but switching from an average diet to a plant-based diet can save more - close to a ton and a half. Globally, livestock are responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions. This includes carbon dioxide from raising the feed crops and clearing forests, methane from the cows and manure, and nitrous oxide from fertilizers.

Cattle, pigs, and poultry consume 70 percent of the grain produced in the U.S. In terms of feeding people, this is not a very efficient use of land. Five times as much land is required to feed a person on a meat-based diet as a vegetarian. The more corn and soybeans grown for animals, the more water and chemicals used. Herbicides sprayed on corn and soybeans amount to 80 percent of all herbicides used in the U.S., contributing to the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

### Simple, positive change

- When you cook, consider meat a condiment and include small amounts in stir-fries, casseroles, and sauces.
- Order the vegetarian choices at restaurants to see what you like.
- Try a meatless dinner a few times each week substituting whole grains, dry beans, nuts, seeds, and dairy products. See [www.nwveg.org](http://www.nwveg.org).
- Seek meat from animals raised locally on small farms. See [www.eatwild.com](http://www.eatwild.com).

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