

# WHOLE FOODS 101



## What are Whole Foods?

Whole foods are found in nature and remain in their natural state, or close to it. They do not have anything added to them, such as sugar, salt, flavorings, or chemicals.

Whole food, plant-based (WFPB) eating focuses on eating more whole foods and cutting back on highly processed foods, meat, and dairy in order to boost overall health.

BUT, if something is labeled plant-based, it doesn't mean that it's a whole food. White rice and white bread are plant-based foods, but most of the heart healthy nutrients have been removed during processing. Choose brown rice or whole wheat bread instead for more whole grains.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are examples of whole foods. A baked potato is considered a whole food, since nothing was added to it, but potato chips are considered a processed food because salt and oil are used to create the end product.

## Benefits of a WFPB diet:

- Helps with weight loss
- Lowers risk of many health problems, such as:
  - Type 2 Diabetes
  - Heart Disease
  - Obesity
- Improves your energy
- Helps the environment
- Safe and nutritious

## Examples of Whole Foods

- Fruits and vegetables
- Nuts and seeds such as almonds, walnuts and sunflower seeds
- Legumes such as chickpeas, black beans and lentils.
- Whole grains such as oats, brown rice, and quinoa.

## Incorporating Whole Foods Into Your Diet

### Add, don't avoid!

Eating whole, plant-based foods doesn't mean avoiding foods you enjoy. By adding more whole foods, you will boost your fiber intake and get more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Take the first step with these tips:

- Add more veggies to every meal.
- Snack on apples with peanut butter, cucumber and hummus or bell pepper dipped in guacamole.
- Replace refined grains like white pasta and processed cereal with whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice, oats, and barley.
- Reach for whole fruit to satisfy your sweet tooth.
- Swap out meat for plant protein like beans or tofu.
- Trade dairy milk for plant milks such as almond milk or cashew milk.

### Be Creative

Whole food, plant-based eating doesn't have to be hard. There are plenty of free easy recipes available online! Brainstorm with friends and family, ask neighbors, and talk to coworkers about their favorite whole food plant-based meals.



### Bonus Tips:

- Experiment with spices and herbs to add flavor
- When shopping for packaged foods, look for products that have a short ingredient list with names you recognize and can pronounce
- Check out local and seasonal produce
- Cook a plant-based meal with friends or family and try it together
- Try a new whole food plant-based recipe once a week
- It's never too late to start eating well!