



# HEALTHY EATING GUIDE

---

## BLUE ZONES RECOMMENDATIONS

Blue Zones® are pockets around the world where people live longer, better®. They eat a plant-based eating pattern referred to as “plant-slant.” It is a principle in which they eat an array of fresh fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts and whole grains. Meat is a celebratory food, a small side or a way to flavor dishes.<sup>1</sup>

## PLANT-BASED EATING PATTERN

It is important to eat a variety of foods that contain enough calories, protein, vitamins, fats and carbohydrates to sustain you. Not eating a balanced amount of nutrient-dense foods can result in negative effects such as decreased energy levels and impaired well-being and can increase the risk of health problems.

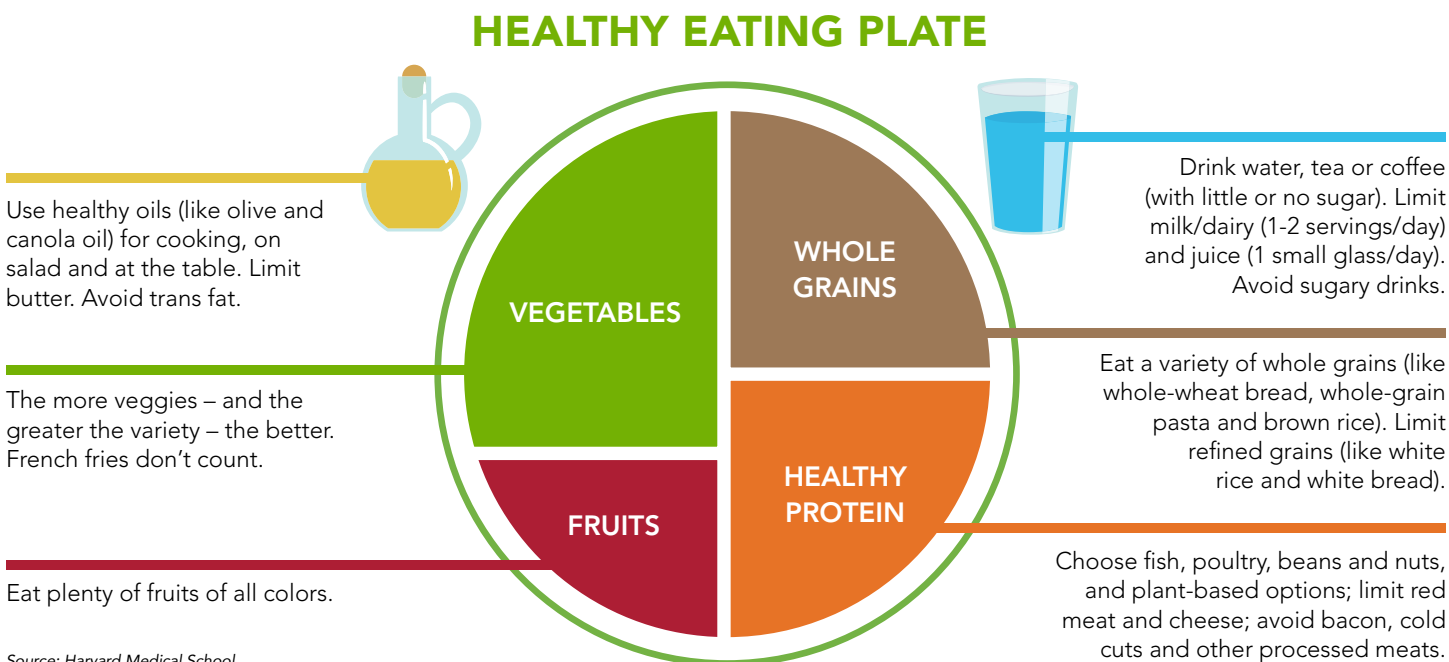
### The benefits of a plant-based eating pattern

Whether you are considering eating less meat or giving it up entirely, consuming high-quality, nutrient plant-based foods is associated with a lower risk of death from cardiovascular diseases. A plant-based eating pattern is linked to:

- Improved cholesterol, blood pressure and sugar levels<sup>2</sup>
- Lowered risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and many cancers<sup>2</sup>

### Try a plant-based eating pattern

Creating a well-balanced meal with nutrition-dense foods is important to create healthy eating habits. The Healthy Eating Plate recommends making half your meal vegetables and fruits. Create a colorful plate! Make the other half grains and healthy protein. Choose whole grains and limit refined grains, such as white bread, as the body turns refined grains into blood sugar. When trying a plant-based eating pattern, choose alternative proteins such as beans, lentils, tofu and other plant-based options. Following the Healthy Eating Plate will lower your risk of cardiovascular diseases and help you live like a centenarian from the Blue Zones.



“For many patients, nutritious food is medicine. According to some studies, plant-based foods have been found to be as or more effective than prescription medicine to lower blood pressure and cholesterol. The risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, along with other complications that affect well-being are strongly linked to dietary choices. A healthy nutrient-dense, plant-based eating pattern is a solution to prevent and treat chronic diseases.”

– William Kim, M.D., Beach Cities Health District Chief Medical Advisor

## EAT DAILY

### 1. Vegetables<sup>3</sup>

- **Benefits:** Source of potassium, fiber, folate, vitamin A and vitamin C
  - Maintains healthy blood pressure, reduces cholesterol, reduces risk of heart disease, protects against infections and absorbs iron
- **Examples:** Spinach, kale, sweet potatoes, etc.
- **Tip:** Vegetables may be raw, cooked, frozen or canned



### 2. Fruits<sup>3</sup>

- **Benefits:** Source of potassium, fiber, folate and vitamin C
  - Maintains healthy blood pressure, reduces cholesterol, reduces risk of heart disease and absorbs iron
- **Examples:** Bananas, oranges, strawberries, etc.
- **Tip:** 1 cup of 100% fruit juice is equivalent to 1 serving



### 3. Whole grains<sup>3</sup>

- **Benefits:** Source of carbohydrates, fiber, B vitamins and minerals
  - Supports a healthy nervous and immune system, helps body release energy from protein, fat and carbohydrates, and carries oxygen in the blood
- **Examples:** Whole wheat bread, brown rice, oats, etc.
- **Tip:** Look for the words “whole grain” or “whole” in the first items of the ingredient list



### 4. Plant-based proteins<sup>3</sup>

- **Benefits:** Source of fiber and nutrients
  - Maintains healthy blood pressure
- **Examples:** Beans, nuts, tofu, etc.
- **Tip:** Substitute meats for plant-based proteins—they are healthier options that provide the similar nutrients found in meat



## TRY TO LIMIT

### 1. Meats

- **Examples:** Seafood, poultry, red meat

### 2. Saturated fats

- **Why:** Can increase risk of heart disease
- **Examples:** Butter, dairy, coconut oil, etc.

Try olive oil instead!



### 3. Added sugars

- **Why:** Increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and obesity
- **Examples:** Soft drinks, candy, cookies, etc.

### 4. Sodium

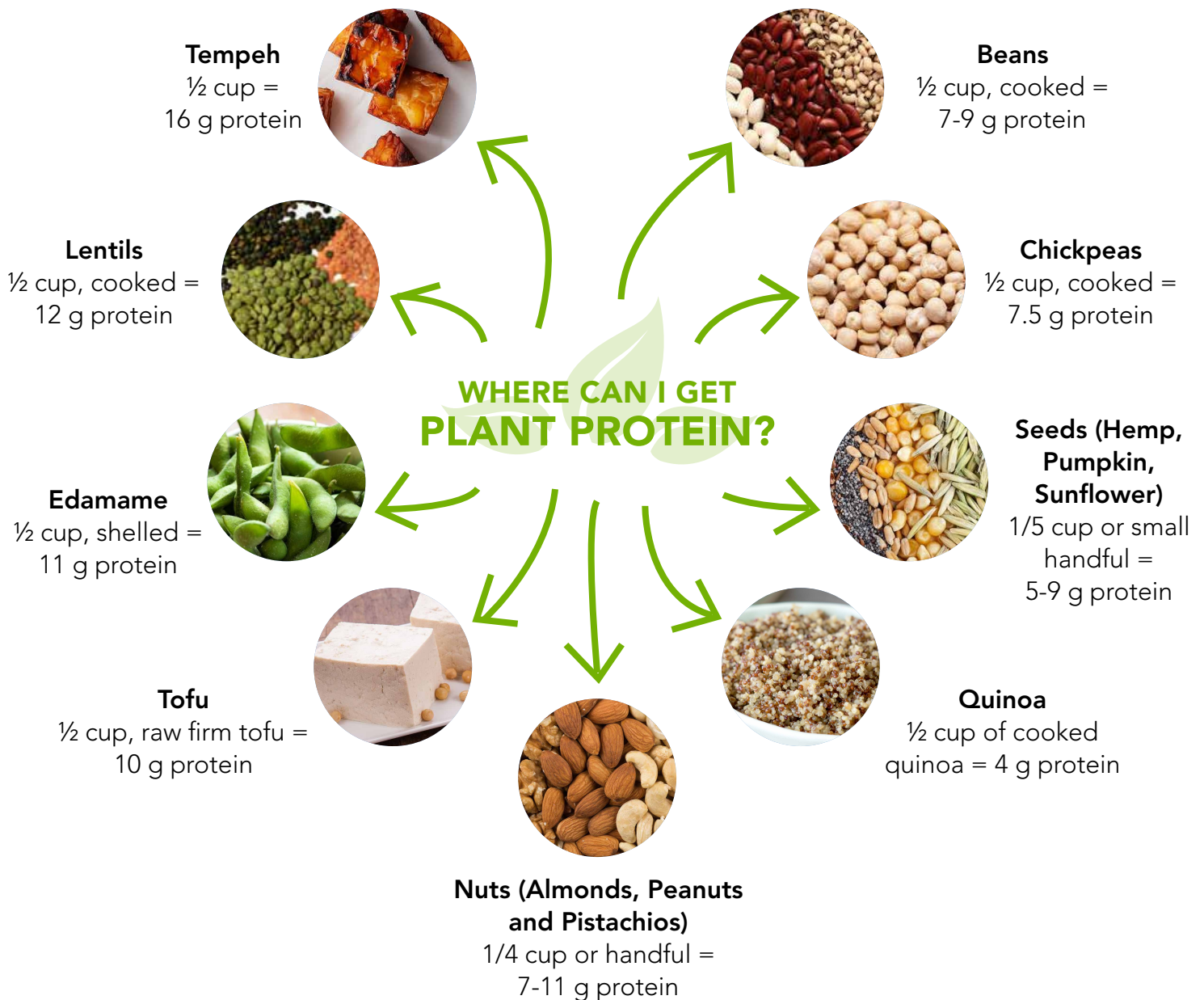
- **Why:** Increases the risk of high blood pressure and stroke
- **Examples:** Bread, cured meats, soup, etc.

# PROTEIN

## How to get enough protein on a plant-based eating pattern

The recommended daily protein intake is 48 g for women and 56 g for men. For example:

- 1 cup of quinoa, 1 cup tofu, 1/2 cup lentils, 1/4 cup almonds = 48 g
- 1 cup of quinoa, 1 cup tofu, 1/2 cup lentils, 1/4 cup almonds, 1/2 cup beans = 56 g



## Make healthier protein choices

While plant-based proteins may be healthier, if you do choose to eat meat, opt for low-fat options and the leanest cuts such as chicken and ground turkey. Trim off as much fat as you can before cooking and use healthier cooking methods: bake, broil, stew and roast. Red meats, including beef and pork, have more saturated fats than chicken or fish and can raise cholesterol and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.<sup>4</sup> The recommended amount of lean meat is 3 oz a day, which is equivalent to the size of a deck of cards.<sup>5</sup>



## BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED RESTAURANTS

When eating out in the Beach Cities (Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach), try to eat at Blue Zones Project Approved™ Restaurants. These restaurants have healthy options and plant-based items. Find the decal on their window and a framed certificate displayed to show that they are a Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurant! For a full list of Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants, Grocery Stores and Caterers, visit [bchd.org/restaurants](http://bchd.org/restaurants).



## SOURCES

1. Blue Zones. Food Guidelines.
2. American Heart Association. How does Plant-Forward (Plant-Based) Eating Benefit your Health?
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture. MyPlate.
3. American Heart Association. Meat, Poultry, and Fish: Picking Healthy Proteins.
4. American Heart Association. Protein and Heart Health.