



A Plant-Based Diet Resolved My Arthritis, Blood Pressure, Insomnia

By Kellie Auld
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About nine years ago, I was hit with [polymyalgia rheumatica](#) (PMR), an inflammatory disease that causes intense muscle aches and stiffness. I was a marathon runner and had always been physically fit up until then. At the time of my diagnosis, I was in such pain that I could not even brush my hair, because raising my arms that high was excruciating. My husband had to lift me out of bed every morning.

Medications and Side Effects

To help manage my symptoms, I had to go on a steroid drug called prednisone. For two years I was on a fairly low dosage (thank goodness). The prednisone cleared up my PMR. But as a result of the prednisone, my [blood pressure](#) increased and my bones became more brittle. I was put on not one but two blood pressure medications. I was diagnosed with osteoporosis and put on an annual intravenous drug to treat that.

With my worsening health came depression. I was prescribed antidepressants and, because I was having trouble sleeping at night, sleeping pills. On top of it all, I began to suffer from arthritis.

I couldn't stand it anymore and knew I had to get my health back.

Time for a Change

In 2016, I watched the documentary *Food, Inc.* That film opened my eyes to the treatment of animals. After watching *Food, Inc.*, I stumbled across the *Forks Over Knives* documentary, and it was like a light went on for me. I realized what an impact my diet could have on my health.

I began to devour all the information I could about whole-food, plant-based eating. And then I decided to go for it, cold turkey. I woke up one morning and told my husband that was it: No more [meat](#), [dairy](#), [eggs](#), or highly processed foods.

Soon after going plant-based, my arthritis pains disappeared. I found myself able to sleep soundly at night without sleeping pills. My blood pressure normalized. I was able to go off antidepressants and discontinue Fosamax treatments. My blood pressure normalized.

Plant-Based and Arthritis Pain-Free

I turn 68 in a few days and I feel great. I do a lot of hiking and snowshoeing, and I am seriously thinking of taking up a wee bit of running again. My arthritis hasn't returned. Though excess weight has never been a big issue for me, I've lost 15 pounds since going plant-based, which I'm happy about.

Since adopting this way of eating, I've had the odd slip-up now and then: There have been a couple times when I've bought some vegan junk foods (the [highly processed faux meats](#) and cheeses). Last spring, my husband and I went on a 35-day [cruise](#). I ate as well as I could, with vegetable-centric meals. But I really needed the vegetables to be prepared healthfully, and that wasn't happening. There was added salt, oil, and sugar. My blood pressure quickly went back up again. When we returned from the cruise, I went to a fasting retreat for 10 days and reset my taste buds and got control of my blood pressure again. Since then, I've been back on course and doing really well again.

I don't have before-and-after photos since you can't see depression, high blood pressure, insomnia, or PMR. But the health

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transformation I've undergone is unmistakable. I am living proof that diet has everything to do with our health, and there is no turning back for me!

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).