



Living Well, 122 Pounds Lighter on a Plant-Based Diet

By Hazel Dixon-Cooper
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At the end of my annual physical in 2016, my doctor tried, once again, to talk to me about my weight. For years, I'd been yo-yo dieting, and weight loss never lasted. "Your cholesterol is climbing and your blood pressure is borderline high," he said. All I heard was "borderline." "I'm still in the safe zone," I thought.

Most everything I ate was unhealthy, and I never stopped eating. On an average day, I would have a pastry and coffee for breakfast. Lunch was always accompanied by chips and dessert. Even when I did have a salad, it was more calorie-laden toppings than greens.

When I sold my first book to a major publisher, I thought the success would help me finally commit to losing weight for good. Instead, I gained 85 pounds. The combination of my sedentary lifestyle, overeating, and stress ultimately led to a diagnosis of heart disease.

That's when I knew I had to take control of my health.

Finding Support for Sustainable Weight Loss

Traditional weight-loss programs had failed me throughout my life. But in 2017, I discovered Forks Over Knives, and I decided to begin transitioning to a whole-food, plant-based diet. One of my biggest challenges was eliminating the convenience of fast and prepackaged food. Another was breaking the salt-and-sugar cycle. But it got easier.

Since going plant-based, I've lost 122 pounds and six sizes. My BMI has dropped 16 points and is still going down.

A Vibrant New Life

Eating this way has helped me in more ways than weight loss. I've learned to love cooking again and experimenting with new flavors and spices. Today, I have more energy than I did 20 years ago. My health routine includes regular exercise at the gym and weekly yoga. I am also training to become a health coach to help others who struggle as I did.

At my last checkup with my cardiologist, he said that he didn't need to see me for one year and that he was pleased to see me take such an active interest in my own health. How different this checkup was from the first one that started me on this path.

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](#).