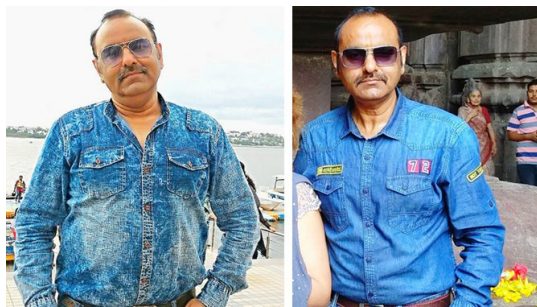
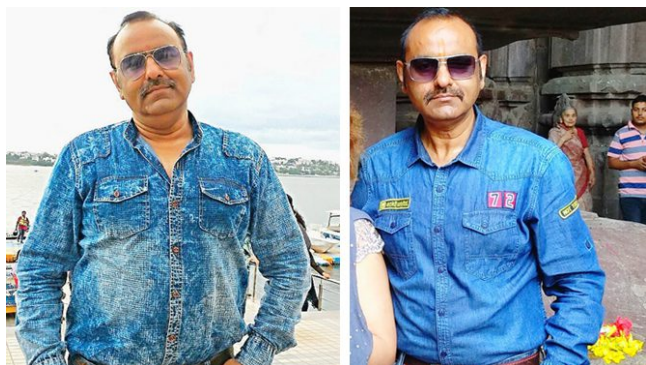




From Cheese-Loving Vegetarian with Sky-High Blood Pressure to Whole-Food, Plant-Based and Healthy

By Anurag Darshan
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Around 10 years ago I was diagnosed with [high blood pressure](#) and [high cholesterol](#). I knew in the back of my mind that changing my diet might help, but I was a vegetarian who loved eating dairy, especially cheese, and I had no real interest in actually making a change. My doctor prescribed me medications to help bring my blood pressure and cholesterol levels down, and I hoped that would be enough.

A few years later I started having acid reflux, so my doctor started me on a medication for that, too. It helped a bit, but I found that whenever I ate a little too much, I developed a pain in the right side of my abdomen. After hearing this, my doctor advised me to get an ultrasound. That's when I found out that I had fatty liver disease. Four more pills were added to my daily regimen.

The medications seemed to keep things in check for a few months, but then the pain started again. Around the same time, I started having heart palpitations, which got so bad that I was admitted to the hospital. There the doctors did an angiogram to evaluate the health of my blood vessels. The results showed that although there was no blockage, my blood pressure was out of control. So I was prescribed two new blood pressure medications, which had side effects that left me feeling fatigued.

Discovering a Path Toward Better Health

One day a friend suggested that I watch the documentary [Forks Over Knives](#). I immediately decided to try out the [whole-food, plant-based diet](#) advocated in the film.

It was very difficult initially: [Giving up dairy was hard](#) for me. But my only options were to take six to eight medications daily that weren't even helping me, or to live a healthy, long life by adopting a plant-based diet. So I stuck with it. I began to eat lots of fruits, salads, nuts, and whole grains, with no added sugar or oil. I started walking two miles daily, too.

After four months of the new diet and walking routine, my blood pressure started coming down and my doctor reduced my medications. I was feeling more energetic and could easily climb stairs. I spent more time online researching whole-food, plant-based nutrition, and discovered insightful interviews with plant-based experts such as Caldwell Esselstyn, MD, and [T. Colin Campbell, PhD](#). The more I learned, the easier it became to stay on a healthy path.

Reaping the Benefits of Plant-Based Eating

After eight months, my doctor found that there was no need for me to continue taking blood pressure medications or cholesterol-lowering medications. My liver was recovering, and my acid reflux had disappeared. After 10 months, all of my chronic health issues had resolved. As a bonus, I'd lost 35 pounds of excess weight.

Today, I am medication-free and remain committed to the whole-food, plant-based way of eating. I have way more energy than ever. Every day, I walk or run about 6 miles and meditate. I feel healthy, happy, and unburdened by disease. I pray that more people will discover the benefits of this lifestyle.

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a

(continued)

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healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).