



On an Oil-Free Plant-Based Diet, I've Normalized My Cholesterol and Improved My Eyesight

By Yolanda Breidenbaugh
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Before finding the whole-food, plant-based way of eating, I had [high cholesterol](#) (280 total), and my husband, Jim, had to have quadruple bypass surgery due to coronary artery blockages. After the bypass surgery, he had to have stents placed twice.

In an attempt to get healthier, we adopted a low-carb, high-fat diet. Then, in November 2019, we watched *Forks Over Knives*. We were convinced by the evidence presented in the film that the whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) way of eating would be better for us than the low-carb diet we'd been following. We read *The Starch Solution*, by [John A. McDougall, MD](#), and that provided further motivation. In April 2020, I went WFPB. I told Jim that he shouldn't feel any pressure to change his eating habits, but after three weeks, he decided to join me. I think he saw what the new diet was doing for my energy levels (and felt bad that I was preparing separate meals for him and me). By May 2020, we were both all in.

Getting Used to Plant-Based Eating

The hardest part of the transition was figuring out what to cook. I'm content to eat very simply, but Jim—although appreciative of anything I make—really enjoys having a variety of flavors, so I learned to cater to that in a healthy way, and I was surprised by how our taste buds adjusted. After we'd been WFPB for about three weeks, Jim said, "You know what? I don't crave chocolate anymore!" You could have knocked me over

with a feather.

We found ourselves reaping some health benefits within months. We both had more energy, and my cholesterol dropped to 147.

Never Going Back

Since going WFPB two and a half years ago, I've kept my cholesterol down, and Jim has been able to discontinue all but one of his medications. I've experienced other benefits, too, especially with my eyesight. I have macular puckering (a condition in which scar tissue grows on the retina, which can lead to vision loss), but I had my eyes tested a couple of weeks ago, and the doctor was amazed how much better things were looking. I've had varicose veins since my last pregnancy in 1983, and a few years ago, they seemed to be getting worse; that stopped when I went WFPB. Also, my hair and nails grow faster!

We love the food, too. One recent hit was black bean burgers on homemade whole wheat buns with [air-fried](#) French fries. It was a smashing success! Some of our other favorites are veggie stir-fries (with beans or tofu); [whole wheat waffles](#) with real maple syrup; hummus and veggie wraps on whole wheat tortillas; and spaghetti and homemade marinara. We love snacking on air-popped popcorn. Sometimes I crisp up some corn tortillas by baking them directly on the oven racks, and we break those and dip them in salsa. We keep a big garden. When it's in full swing, we eat lots of tomatoes and cucumbers and sweet peppers. Corn-on-the-cob season is something that we look forward to all year. And at 73, I can work hard in the garden in the summertime for several hours and not get worn out or sore. I sometimes get tired of being hot, but I do not get worn out.

Jim and I both just feel so much better. We will never go back to our old way of eating. I have no interest in losing my eyesight or in losing my husband to [heart disease](#). I am so grateful to the doctors who pioneered this movement. I truly believe that going WFPB has saved our lives!

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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](#).