



After a Prostate Cancer Diagnosis Spurred Me to Go Plant-Based, I Feel Like the Energizer Bunny

By Michael Andrus
May 17 2023

For most of my life, I didn't struggle with any health issues at all. I exercised, drank in moderation, and ate what I thought was a healthy diet. Breakfast was always lots of coffee with some toast. Lunch was typically leftover spaghetti or chicken. At dinnertime, some favorites were lasagna, tacos, pork chops and gravy. In hindsight, I was not eating well, but I seemed to be doing fine. I never needed to go to the doctor.

When I turned 65 and qualified for Medicare, my sister suggested I get a physical to see where my health stood. Thank goodness I took her advice. My doctors ended up finding out that I have metastatic prostate [cancer](#). For my wife and me, this was the shock of our lives.

The Turning Point

The doctors recommended a regimen of chemotherapy drugs, warning me of side effects including fatigue and weight gain. When I asked what would happen if I didn't take the drugs, they said most likely I'd be bed-ridden and in lots of pain within 12 to 18 months. It was a grim picture either way. Of course, I chose to take the drugs. I also underwent radiation for cancer in my ribs and prostate.

Things felt out of my control, which was a hard reality to face, especially for a successful self-employed guy. When it came to my construction business, my finances, or anything else, I always felt that I could solve any problem.

It was during this time of facing the unknown that my cousin Amy called me. She recommended a book called *How Not to Die* by [Michael Greger, MD](#). She'd read it and it changed her life. Being an avid reader, I downloaded the e-book and devoured it, learning a great deal about nutrition and plant-based eating. It was the beginning of a dramatic change in my life.

I shared with my wife what I'd learned about the [health benefits of a plant-based diet](#)—the significant impact it can have in fighting disease, lowering blood pressure, managing weight, and helping the body to heal. She agreed to try it with me. In July 2022, we decided to jump in, full bore, on a plant-based diet. We cut out all animal products, as well as alcohol.

We didn't find it all that hard to change our eating habits, which, based on what I read and other people I talked to, was unusual. I continued reading books on plant-based nutrition and educating myself. Early on we ate a lot of [highly processed vegan options](#), but within a few months, we transitioned to a whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet.

A Surprising Surge in Energy

I'll be honest: I didn't notice any changes at first. I continued my chemo regimen and had several months of radiation treatments. My mental state wasn't great. But I did lose some weight, despite being on chemo drugs known to cause weight gain, and my son and I took up running together, training to do a half-marathon.

In early April 2022, my wife and I flew to Washington, D.C., to see the cherry blossoms. We stayed downtown and rode bikes all over the city. The weather was perfect. I found myself feeling more energized than I had in years. As we biked around one afternoon, I remember asking my wife, "Why do you think I have so much energy?" I figured it was a fluke. But as weeks went by, my energy remained high.

Around this time, someone suggested I watch the documentary *The Game Changers*. As I heard athletes in the film describe their increased energy levels from going plant-based, it occurred to me that my surge in energy might be due to the WFPB diet

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I'd been following for a few months at that point.

Feeling Unstoppable

Today I'm going on two years of plant-based eating. My labs have steadily improved. My PSA (prostate-specific antigen, a blood test used to screen for prostate cancer) is down to zero, and the cancer in my ribs is in remission. The doctors are taking me off of all drugs in August. After that, I'll have bloodwork done every three months, but otherwise I'm a free man. I just turned 67, and I feel great.

I love cooking plant-based dishes, and everyone loves my tofu scramble! My friends ask me about my lifestyle—how I like it, how I feel. I tell them that I feel like the Energizer Bunny. I have all kinds of energy. I can out-work anybody. I can run. I can do 100 pushups. My friends might not really believe all that, but my family does. They see it.

I don't know how much time I have left or what's in the cards for me, but plant-based eating will continue to be a part of my life. I'm always advocating for it. I've gotten my sister and my son onto a plant-based path, and many of my friends have changed their eating habits for the better, too.

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](#).