



I'm Keeping Crohn's Disease in Check with a WFPB Diet

By Chelsey Williams
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I grew up eating home-cooked meals that my mother prepared for us every day in our small kitchen after she got home from work. Although Mom eventually switched to a vegetarian diet (after nearly choking on a tough steak cooked on an outdoor stove during a family camping trip), the rest of us continued to happily consume meat and other animal products.

In 2015, at the age of 33, I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. With two young children, I was desperate to find something that would make me feel better. Of course, I was prescribed plenty of medications, some of which helped a little, but they came with so many uncomfortable side effects and potentially harmful long-term effects that I didn't want to stay on them for long.

Eventually, I stumbled upon a few books about healing with plant-based nutrition that caught my attention. I didn't [cut out meat](#) entirely, but I ate a lot less of it. For a while, I experienced some relief from my Crohn's symptoms.

Ready to Throw in the Towel

In 2019, I got really sick and ended up in the hospital a few times. In 2020, a surgeon removed an extremely damaged section of my small intestine. After that surgery, I expected to feel 100% better... but I didn't. I was frustrated enough that I was about ready to throw in the towel and just take all the scary medications indefinitely.

But I ended up going back to the dietary drawing board one more time. Lent was coming up, so I resolved to eat only fruits, vegetables, beans, and nuts for 40 days. I found that I felt so much lighter. I decided to cut out meat completely. I didn't really have a taste for it after the surgery, so it wasn't that hard to do. And at that point, in my quest to eliminate my Crohn's triggers, I had already cut gluten, dairy, corn, refined sugar, oils, soy, eggs, caffeine, and alcohol from my diet. What was one more food, in the grand scheme of things? So I got to work, researching and planning a [whole-food, plant-based \(WFPB\) diet](#), as a last-ditch attempt to heal myself from Crohn's.

Off All Medications

Within a year of going WFPB, I was able to discontinue all medications, and I felt better than I had in 10 years.

It's been a few years now, and I've stayed on a WFPB path. I love to eat lots of fresh fruit, [Buddha bowls](#) with quinoa and root veggies, big salads with simple cashew- or tahini-based dressings, potato bowls with roasted veggies, and vegetable curries with brown rice. I return to Forks Over Knives again and again for new [healthy vegan recipes](#).

Things aren't perfect. I occasionally have small Crohn's flare-ups, mostly stress-related—but with my healthy diet and lifestyle, I'm able to get past them much easier than in the past. I wholeheartedly believe that I will be completely healed one day, and whole plant foods will be a major key to that healing. Getting plenty of [sleep](#) and exercise, managing stress, and keeping a positive mindset are other things I work on every day, as well.

A couple of years ago, I was inspired to get certified as a health coach to help others eat more plants and lead healthier lifestyles. It's work that I love and look forward to every day. Eating plants has helped me make incredible strides in my own health journey, and now I get to help others improve their health as well—what could be better?!

I feel amazing and excited to live the rest of my life as a WFPB eater.

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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](#).