



Thanks to a Whole-Food, Plant-Based Diet, I No Longer Need Statins

By Rainer Lucks
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I ate a standard Western diet for much of my life. In 2006, routine blood tests established that I had high lipid levels. Because I have a family history of heart disease, my general practitioner strongly recommended that I begin taking cholesterol-lowering medication. I was prescribed various types of statins over the years, with many negative side effects. I followed my doctor's dietary recommendations, eating more fruit, vegetables, and lean meats, while still consuming dairy.

Unfortunately, this treatment plan didn't prevent me from developing [cardiovascular disease](#). I eventually needed to undergo a triple bypass, followed by four stents. In 2016, I was diagnosed with a fatty liver. My doctors told me not to worry too much about it. Frustrated, I began to question the whole medical system.

Floored by the Evidence: Discovering the WFPB Lifestyle

One day five years ago, my sister-in-law casually asked me if I had ever tried Forks Over Knives' whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet. I told her that I'd never even heard of it. Curious to know more, I began looking for

information online, as I'm the kind of person who needs to see evidence to believe health claims. I came across some of Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn's presentations on countering heart disease with a WFPB diet. Initially skeptical, I bought a copy of his book, *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, and decided to read it with an open mind. As I read, I was totally floored. I could not deny the evidence.

So, in 2019, I started a WFPB diet, with the hope of addressing the root cause of my cardiovascular disease, rather than just treating the symptoms, as I'd been doing for so many years. Following Dr. Esselstyn's stringent low-fat WFPB diet was not easy at first. But I kept reminding myself of the alternative.

Within two weeks of adopting this lifestyle, I started noticing subtle changes. Looking in the mirror, my face appeared healthier. I felt a little more energized. My [blood pressure](#), which had been high, was gradually coming down. These early results encouraged me to keep eating WFPB. Over the next few months, I shed some extra weight I'd been carrying, losing 25 pounds.

5 Years Later, I'm Statin-Free

It has been five years since I went WFPB. I no longer need statins. My [cholesterol](#) is within the healthy range, as is my blood pressure. I have easily maintained an ideal weight. Before going WFPB, I suffered from back pain due to angina; that's no longer an issue. There is no evidence that I have a fatty liver.

Doctor visits are no longer frustrating, as I found a new general practitioner who is WFPB herself and uses lifestyle medicine in her practice. There are only two such doctors in my city, but I assume that over time, that number will multiply.

Last year, I was diagnosed with interstitial lung disease, a condition in which scarring of the lungs makes it difficult to get enough oxygen. This is sometimes caused by cardiac medications, and I wonder if this might have

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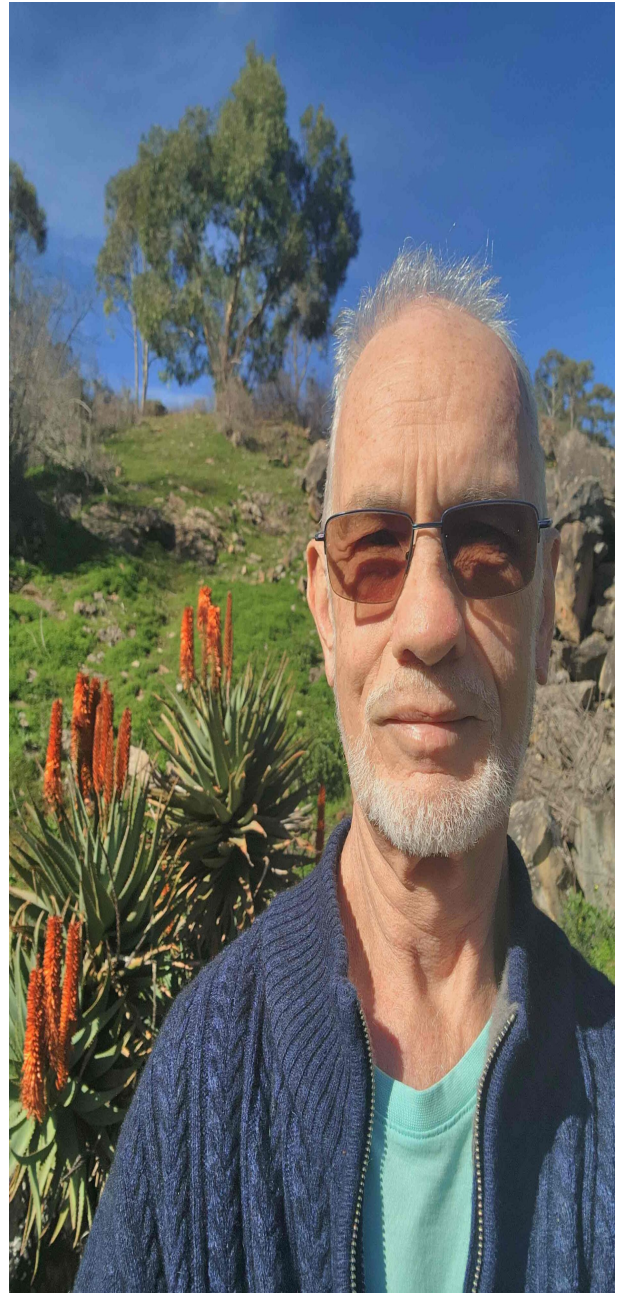
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been the case for me. Regardless, I'm hopeful that with my healthful lifestyle, I will halt its progression. My last visit to the pulmonologist indicated that my lung capacity is stable.

At nearly 70 years old, I hike up and down hills every week, covering at least two and a half miles without any issues. I love the outdoors.

I don't like to spend too much time cooking for myself, so I keep my meals plain, simple, and tasty. I'll often make spaghetti with veggies, spices, and homemade oil-free sauce. I also like to steam mushrooms in vegetable broth, garlic, and vegan Worcestershire sauce, and I serve them with mashed potatoes (made with oat milk and a dash of salt). I enjoy making my own hearty [veggie soups](#). The way I look at food today is vastly different from how I looked at it before I went WFPB. I treat food as my medicine, first and foremost.

I'm so grateful I made this lifestyle change so that I can be here for my daughter (pictured with me above) for as long as possible. I hope my story inspires others to take up this lifestyle. I strongly recommend it to anyone who values their health.



To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#). For meal-planning support, check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.