



From Bacon-Lover to Vegan: My Unlikely Journey to Better Health

By Craig Milton
2025-04-29 09:18:29



For much of my life, I was the stereotypical “never going vegan” guy: double cheeseburgers, meat-lovers pizzas, *Mmmm...bacon* jokes. My parents are retired dairy and cattle farmers, and I farmed pigs and chickens myself. I was also an avid fisherman. Veganism was not remotely appealing to me. In fact, I ridiculed it.

In 2019, my then-fiancée (now wife), Deb, and I moved to a rural area in Summerland, British Columbia, right next to a dairy farm. At that point, Deb had already been vegetarian for over a decade, as long as I’d known her. One day, the farmer next door separated the cows from their calves. The calves were moved just far enough away that they couldn’t see their mothers—but they could still hear them. For 48 hours, the grieving mothers and their babies cried out to each other nonstop, calling in vain to be reunited. Deb, a town girl, had never experienced anything like it. When I explained what was happening—that it was the mothers and babies calling to each other—she made the connection and went vegan on the spot. No more dairy; no more eggs.

The Moment Everything Changed

Since I did most of the cooking and grocery shopping, I suddenly had to figure out how to feed a vegan. At that point, I barely knew what veganism even meant. So I started watching health documentaries to educate myself. I began with *Forks Over Knives*, then moved on to *What the Health*, *Eating You Alive*, *Cowspiracy*, and *Earthlings*.

Eventually, I found my way to *Dominion*, an Australian documentary with hidden-camera footage from slaughterhouses.

Ironically, I was eating leftover chicken taquitos when I pressed play. Twenty minutes into the film, I was vegan—and sobbing. I was incredibly moved by what I saw: a side of animal agriculture I thought I understood but had never really confronted. I resolved to never eat animal products again.

At the time, I was obese (305 pounds), with prediabetes, high cholesterol, inflammation, frequent chest pain, gout, acid reflux, arthritis, [erectile dysfunction](#), and constant headaches. I was headed straight toward [heart disease](#), stroke, cancer, and dementia—basically, all the “old man” diseases.

The Pleasant Side Effects of Going Plant-Based

Within two years, I’d adopted a largely whole-food, plant-based diet, quit drinking alcohol, and lost 110 pounds.

I’ve since gained back about 20 pounds (I went a little underweight for a while), but I’ve kept off the bulk of the weight for over four years now. Today, in my mid-50s, I take zero medications. I hardly ever get sick. And you know those claims from *The Game Changers* about improved sexual performance on a vegan diet? Absolutely accurate—a very pleasant surprise for a middle-aged man.

One of the best parts of this transition has been doing it alongside my wife. Before, we had very different diets; the only overlap was eggs and cheese. Now, we cook together, and I’ve become a much better cook. Removing butter, cheese, and eggs opened up a world of flavor I never appreciated before. Our meals are now colorful, diverse, and delicious. It’s been eye-opening to learn how whole plant foods are [high in nutrients](#) and low in calories. Being a big guy with a big appetite, I love that I can pile my plate high without worrying about excess [calories](#), fat, or cholesterol.

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This shift didn't just change my health—it changed our lives. What started as an effort to support my wife's ethical choices ended up saving my life. The WFPB diet has also drastically reduced our food bill and cut our household waste by about fivefold. No eggs, cheese, or meat has been a boon for the pocketbook.

Today, we run a small [vegan animal sanctuary](#), offering forever homes to goats, sheep, chickens, roosters, ducks, geriatric dogs, and even a python. We garden, steward our permaculture-inspired property, and have become more deeply connected to nature and wildlife than ever before.

All of this stemmed from one simple choice. I encourage anyone to [give it a try](#). You can support your health, the environment, and the animals all by making a change with your very next meal.

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](#).