



From Battling a Fibroid and Facing Surgery to Fit and Thriving on a Plant-Based Diet

By Suzanne Miles
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One day in 2011, I found myself discussing a hysterectomy with my doctor. I was 54 years old and had been struggling unsuccessfully with health problems for some time. Suddenly a light went off inside me. I thought to myself, “This is not my story. I’m not going to be a victim to this thing growing inside my uterus.” I wanted to avoid major surgery if I could.

Since I had returned to my native Canada from Australia a decade before, my health had been on a steady decline. My cholesterol was high and my doctor had been pressuring me to go on statins for years. Since I resisted going on medications, he told me I was setting myself up for a heart attack in my 50’s. Instead of going on statins, I tried to change my diet to be healthier. At the time, “healthy” meant eating wild salmon and organic veggies, beef, pork, and chicken. It also meant limiting the processed snacks I loved like potato chips and Reese’s peanut butter cups. It didn’t mean that I stopped socializing and celebrating with wine, beer, cakes, and rich desserts.

During this time, I also had a painful fibroid growing inside me. It got so big that you could see it on the outside of my body. That’s when my doctor told me he’d have to perform a hysterectomy, and that’s when I had an epiphany. I had felt out of control with my health issues up until this point, but I decided to take back my health and life.

I didn’t know exactly what I was going to do then, but I felt empowered to make a change. I started to research and two weeks later, I saw [The Last Heart Attack](#) documentary by Dr. Sanjay Gupta. It featured Bill Clinton and Dr. Esselstyn (who was in [Forks Over Knives](#)) and discussed the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

After we saw it, my husband and I opened the cupboards and started tossing everything out. We were committed to learn and start at the beginning. We held hands and just turned the ship around. I did research, read a lot from plant-based doctors, and started shopping and learning to cook again. I also started to do some cardio exercise, which was not easy to do at the beginning due to my excess weight and poor health. In addition to changing my lifestyle completely, I detoxed my medicine cabinet to get rid of the more chemical-filled

personal care products.

As soon as I stopped eating meat and dairy, I couldn’t believe how quickly the fibroid reduced. Because it was so large and visible externally, we could see it shrinking in size within weeks. I was surprised how soon I also started to feel better. Week by week, things started to change and my excitement began to rise. I looked better, felt great, and my health took an amazing turn. We eat a lot of greens, lentils, sweet potatoes, beans, fresh herbs, spices, nuts, and seeds, and we really enjoy what we eat.



I have lost 60 pounds and although I’m now 5 years older than when I started on a plant-based diet, I feel decades younger! My husband was also a bigger guy when we started our new plant-based lifestyle, and now we’re both fit, slender, and strong. We cook together, eat together, run together, and are having a great time! I ski, cycle, hike, run, swim, kayak, and do everything and anything I can to keep fit and enjoy life.

After struggling with my health and weight for many years, I feel like there’s nothing I can’t do now. At almost 60 years old, I’m just getting started.