



## Montefiore Health System Now Plays Forks Over Knives and Serves Plant-Based Meals at Patient Beds

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We are very pleased to share that in addition to our plant-based outpatient [Cardiac Wellness Program](#), Montefiore now offers plant-based vegan meals for inpatients and that *Forks Over Knives* plays in patient rooms!

Here is our story.

As a plant-based cardiologist at [Montefiore Health System](#), I have had the privilege of seeing patients transform before my eyes; I've witnessed them evolve from illness toward health, from despair toward hope, mostly by changing what is at the end of their fork. The initial seed of change, however, may not immediately take root. Plant-based diets are uncommon in the community where I work, namely, the Bronx, New York. In fact, the Bronx is one of the least healthy inner cities in America, in part due to its limited access to healthier foods; however, Montefiore is working to change that.

When I mention a plant-based diet to some of my patients, they quite literally look at me like I am from Mars. They have never heard of such a thing, and the climb sometimes can be very steep. I have had patients chose not to pursue a plant-based diet for years, then something clicks and they suddenly decide to adopt it and come to their next visit twenty pounds lighter. That is always a great feeling, and these patients become some of the strongest advocates for plant-based nutrition.

These transformations take place in our outpatient clinic. However, sometimes we meet patients for the first time when they are admitted to the hospital. Many times this encounter occurs following a heart attack, an episode of heart failure, or some other urgent cardiac issue. These hospitalizations are great opportunities to teach people about ways by which they can become healthier. So, breaking from the usual mold, we decided to bring plant-based nutrition and education into the hospital.

We wanted to reinforce physician discussions with inpatients about plant-based vegan meals and offer inpatients the opportunity to watch *Forks Over Knives* in

real-time, in the hospital. This combination is a win, win, win: the medical team highlights the importance of plant-based nutrition, the patient then tastes it, and the film powerfully reinforces the message.

So we did just that. After a successful collaboration with Montefiore's Department of Food and Nutrition Services, we created plant-based vegan meals for inpatients that can now be ordered in five of our hospital locations. Simultaneously, Montefiore's Department of Patient Education worked closely with the incredible team at Forks Over Knives, and now the *Forks Over Knives* film is available to play in those same five hospitals, in front of roughly 2,300 patient beds!

To my knowledge, Montefiore is the only hospital in the world to offer this combination of resources for patients. I hope many more will join in soon.

Now, when I visit my in-patients, I know that I have my plant-based posse with me. I discuss the diet with the patient (and perhaps their family), we order the patient plant-based meals (we call them "Heart Healthy Vegan" in our system), and I ask them all to watch the film (I even offer to turn it on before leaving the room!).

A strong seed has been planted, and the feedback has been great. In fact, we've even had patients watch the film before being seen by a physician, and then call the nurses' station to ask if they could eat the "Forks Over Knives" way.

This great collaboration has made Mars seem a little less far away. Thank you, Forks Over Knives!