



I DITCHED MEAT, DAIRY, AND 30 POUNDS OF EXTRA WEIGHT

By Yazmin Lopez

Up until a year ago, my eating habits were bad. Having grown up in a Hispanic household, I'd been eating animal products all my life, with meat and cheese being central parts of my diet—lots of tacos and tamales. A few years ago, I started to really recognize the negative impact the diet was having on my health, most obviously with my weight. But I didn't know anything about healthy weight-loss, and at first, I tried really harmful methods: I took diet pills that I hoped would burn all the calories that I ate, and I developed an eating disorder.

Flipping the Switch

It wasn't until I saw the impact that a diet high in fat and animal products was having on my children's health that I recognized the need for a long-term healthy change. Regular fast-food meals led to my daughter becoming obese, and when the doctors ran blood tests they found that she had high cholesterol. That broke my heart and flipped a switch inside of me. "What are you doing, Yazmin?" I said to myself. I knew I needed to take care of my health and my children's health.

I started looking for information on different diets and came across the whole-food, plant-based way of eating. I joined some WFPB groups on Google and Facebook and watched a lot of YouTube videos. I threw out all the animal products in my kitchen. I stopped going to fast-food restaurants. I stopped buying frozen TV dinners for my kids. I began cooking more at home, all whole-food, plant-based meals. It wasn't easy at first, especially because we often go to family and friends' parties and they serve foods with a lot of meat, dairy, and oil. It was hard for me to turn it down. People laughed and made jokes about my eating habits, saying things like, "You can't stop eating meat. You will be so weak!" But I was motivated to make the switch for my health and my family's, and I stuck to it.

Never Going Back

It's been one year since I went whole-food, plant-

based. I've lost over 30 pounds and feel much healthier overall. Since I've changed my eating habits, my kids have gotten healthier, too. They never used to eat vegetables; now they're part of our meals every day, and their favorite dish is rice and beans. I love black beans, too, and always cook a big pot at home, saving leftovers in the freezer to have extra on hand. I use lots of delicious spices in my cooking. Though I'm the only person in my family who is fully committed to the diet 100 percent of the time, I'm working toward one day getting the whole family on board.

Going WFPB has changed my life, and I'll never go back. I'm so happy I made this decision. My goal is to help others get started on this way of eating, too. I hope my story inspires more people to give it a try.

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.