



Is Your Doctor In? How to Talk to Your Physician About Going Plant-Based

By Karen Asp, MA, CPT, VLCE
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More and more physicians are recognizing the health benefits of plant-based nutrition, but they're not all there yet. "It's important to have a doctor who's willing to work with you, especially if you're on medication or have chronic issues," says Michelle McMacken, MD, assistant professor of medicine at NYU School of Medicine and director of the Bellevue Hospital Weight Management Clinic in New York City. To ensure you get the support you need, follow these tips.

Tell Your Doc You're Assuming Responsibility for Your Health

"When physicians hear this, which they rarely do, they get excited and they're more open to a conversation," says Scott Stoll, MD, board-certified specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and cofounder of the Plantrician Project. Make sure you come armed with resources, like a list of documentaries that have inspired you or evidence-based reviews such as the [official position paper on plant-based diets](#) from the world's largest organization of nutrition professionals, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Avoid Asking Doctors About Their Own Dietary Choices

"Most physicians will think this is taking it too much to the personal level, which could make them feel defensive," McMacken says.

Switch Doctors if You Run into a Brick Wall

If you're encountering skepticism and pushback from a doctor who's not convinced about the benefits of a WFPB diet, move on. "You're in control of your health, and you need to find a physician who respects and honors your choice," Stoll says.

Search Online Directories

The free search tool on [Plant-based Docs](#) lists more than 600 health care providers nationwide. "We want to serve as a bridge between people looking for health care professionals who are passionate about plant-based nutrition and lifestyle medicine," says Stoll, a cofounder of the site. Another directory to check out: the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine's [Plant-Based Doctor Finder](#).

Tap into the Community

If you're not already involved in the [Forks Over Knives Official Plant-Based Community](#) on Facebook (or a local group focused on plant-based eating), the time to join is now. The support you'll get from these groups is tremendous, and you can often ask members who live in your area if they have recommendations.

Team Up with a Plant-based Dietitian or Health Coach

"While they're not physicians, they can help educate you about making changes, especially if your doctor isn't familiar with this eating plan," McMacken says.

Share Your Success

(continued)

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Whether you're meeting with a doctor for the first or 50th time, do share how good you feel on a WFPB diet. "This can be a potentially great opportunity to influence somebody who directly sees your results over time," says Stoll, who adds that he's met many physicians whose interest in plant-based nutrition was sparked by their patients' transformations.

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.