



## New Study: Healthy Plant-Based Diets Associated with Significantly Lower Risk of Chronic Kidney Disease

By  
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Healthy plant-based diets may significantly reduce the risk of developing chronic kidney disease, according to a new study. “[Plant-Based Diets and Incident CKD and Kidney Function](#),” published in the April 2019 issue of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, examined data from more than 14,000 middle-aged adults monitored over the course of 30 years. The conclusion: Participants with highest adherence to a healthy plant-based diet were 14 percent less likely to develop CKD than those with lowest adherence to a healthy plant-based diet. Additionally, plant-based diets were associated with a slower decline of estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), a marker of kidney function.

It’s the latest entry into a growing body of evidence of [plant-based diets’ potential to prevent CKD](#), including a [2017 study](#) that found significant reduction in CKD risk when one daily serving of red and processed meat was replaced with plant sources of protein.

“Our findings are consistent with previous studies, in that higher consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes and lower consumption of red and processed meats are associated with a lower risk of kidney disease,” says Casey M. Rebholz, PhD, who served as the study’s lead author. Hyunju Kim, a Johns Hopkins postdoctoral fellow, led the research.

Notably, Rebholz and Kim’s research team didn’t just compare the outcomes of plant-based and non-plant-based diets; they distinguished between types of plant-based diets. Healthy plant-based diets—which the study’s authors defined as being high in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes—were associated with the greatest reduction in risk of CKD. High adherence to less healthy plant-based diets—defined here as consisting of high amounts of refined grains, sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages, potato or corn chips, French fries, and fruit juices—was associated with an elevated risk of CKD.

In assessing why healthy plant-based diets are associated with a reduced risk of CKD, the study cites fiber intake as a likely contributing factor.

“Our results showed that increasing consumption of healthful plant foods is important—for example, choosing whole grains instead of refined grains and choosing whole fruits instead of fruit juice,” says Rebholz.