



I Use Less Insulin, Got off Statins, and Lost 50 Pounds on a Plant-Based Diet

By Yvonne McGill
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Yvonne McGill had type 1 diabetes and a host of other health issues, including hypertension, hypothyroidism, and rheumatoid arthritis. Going plant-based enabled her to use less insulin to manage her diabetes and get off blood pressure pills and statins completely.

Plant-based eating was not a part of my family's traditional culture. Growing up Dominican, all I knew was rice, beans, chicken, pork, and beef.

Diagnosis: Juvenile Diabetes

At age 9, I was diagnosed with [Type 1 diabetes](#). I remember my mother crying in the doctor's office as if I had been given a life sentence.

I was taught about medication, not nutrition. I believed that as long as I took my insulin, I could eat and drink whatever I wanted. I was so wrong.

At age 26, I had my son seven weeks prematurely. I was diagnosed with [hypertension](#) and hypothyroidism. I had high cholesterol by age 30 and diabetic retinopathy by age 35. At 40, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and diabetic gastroparesis. I've had my gallbladder removed; bone spurs in my heel, shoulder, and toe; trigger fingers; and Dupuytren's disease. I was given cortisone shots, which raised my blood sugar astronomically and caused me to gain weight. I reached 198 pounds. (I'm only 5'5".)

Ready for a Change

One day while watching documentaries, I came across *Forks Over Knives*. I became determined to get better. In March 2015, I gave up eating all animal products, processed foods, and refined carbohydrates. I ate whole grains, beans, and all the vegetables I could find.

Within three months, I lost 20 pounds. My cholesterol stabilized, so my doctor took me off of the statin medication. Within six months, I had dropped another 30 pounds, and he took me off the blood pressure pills. My A1C declined dramatically, so my insulin prescription was cut in half. My joint pain lessened. My

eyes improved; I no longer had symptoms of retinopathy. I was utterly amazed. A whole-food, plant-based diet turned my health and my world around.

My friends tell me I'm aging backward. I tell them and everyone I can that we can cook our traditional foods in a healthier way and it will taste as good. I love making vegetable and bean chili and empanadas stuffed with vegetables, quinoa, and beans. I enjoy sharing my journey and letting others know that it's not that hard to make the change; all we have to do is make the choice.

Read Next: [How a Vegan Diet Impacts Diabetes](#)