

# Benefits of Plant-Based Diet in Black Adults

Plant-based diets may help Black adults lower cholesterol, blood pressure and lose weight.

April 9, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

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In observance of Minority Health Month this April, one cardiologist discussed how Black Americans can improve their health outcomes by increasing their intake of plant-based foods, [Kaiser Permanente reports](#).

Regional chief of cardiology for Kaiser Permanente, Columbus Batiste, MD, said cutting out meat and increasing intake of fiber-rich plant-based foods has been “a lifesaver” for many of his patients in Southern California.

In the United States, nearly half (48%) of Black Americans have [obesity](#), according to the [American Psychological Association](#). The health risks associated with obesity include cancer, heart disease, diabetes and liver disease.

In fact, in both adolescents and adults, eating more ultra-processed food was linked to an increased risk of developing [metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease \(MASLD\)](#), according to study results presented earlier this year at the [AASLD Liver Meeting](#).

MASLD, [the new name](#) for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and its more severe form, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH, formerly known as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH), are responsible for a growing proportion of advanced liver disease worldwide. The buildup of fat in the liver can lead to inflammation, fibrosis, [cirrhosis](#) and even [liver cancer](#).

When it comes to diet, [studies show](#) that Black people consume less vegetables, dietary fiber, whole grains, milk and other nutrients compared with white people. Batiste recommends switching to a plant-based diet, which has been shown to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities in all populations. A [Mediterranean diet](#), for example, emphasizes plant foods.

Batiste added that Black adults who closely adhere to a whole-food, plant-based diet can lose weight, lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels.

“Individuals who closely adhere to the diet demonstrate a 16% lower risk of death as well as a reduced susceptibility to heart attacks and strokes compared to those who don’t stick to the diet as closely,” Batiste told Kaiser Permanente.

To read more, click [#Diet](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[If Diet Influences Cancer, Then What Makes a Healthy Diet?](#)” “[One in Eight People Are Now Living With Obesity](#)” and “[New Breast Cancer Research Shows Importance of Diet and Exercise.](#)”

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