CAN A PLANT-BASED PROGRAM CALM RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?

IN RANDOMIZED TRIALS, DISEASE ACTIVITY DROPPED.

0.9 point bigger drop in RA disease activity (DAS28) in 16 weeks with a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle program vs. usual care (randomized, 83 people). Still there a year later.

Walrabenstein et al. · Rheumatology (Oxford) · 2023 [1]

WHAT DID THEY CHANGE?

- **Whole-food, plant-based eating**
- **Physical activity**
- **Stress management**
- **Stayed on their RA treatment**

A full lifestyle program, added to medication, not instead of it.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK YOUR DOCTOR?

1. **Could changing my diet help my RA alongside my treatment?** [1]

2. **Can I try a plant-based diet and exercise program while I stay on my medication?** [1]

3 **How will we tell whether it is working?**

4 **If my disease calms down, could we talk about lowering my medication?** [2]

1 year later, people who fasted briefly, then ate vegan and later vegetarian, still had less joint pain, swelling and stiffness than those on their usual diet (randomized, 53 people).

Kjeldsen-Kragh et al. · The Lancet · 1991 [3]

! **Work with your doctor, not around them. Never stop a medication on your own.**

BOTTOM LINE **Food can turn down RA. Randomized trials, on top of treatment, with a net drop in medication a year later.**

MORE OF THE EVIDENCE

- In the Plants for Joints trial, 83 people with RA did a 16-week program of whole-food, plant-based eating, physical activity and stress management, or usual care. Disease activity improved more in the program group. [1]
- One year later the improvement held, and participants had a net decrease in medication. [2]
- In a Lancet trial, 27 patients who fasted briefly and then followed a vegan and later vegetarian diet improved in joint pain, swelling, morning stiffness and grip strength, compared with 26 on their usual diet. The benefits were still there after one year. [3]

Keep in mind: Participants knew which group they were in, and the programs combined diet with other changes.

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WE TAKE ZERO PRESCRIPTIONS.

That's our choice, not a rule for you. Some prescriptions save lives, like antibiotics for an infection. If you are not changing your diet, stay on the medications your doctor prescribes. If you go plant-based, keep up with your blood work. That way your doctor can safely reduce your medications or take you off them altogether.

I'm not anti-medicine. I'm pro-health.

Don't take my word for any of this. Check it with your favorite AI, read the original studies, then bring them to your doctor.

NOTES FROM MY APPOINTMENT

DATE AND DOCTOR

WHAT WE AGREED TO TRY

WHEN WE WILL RECHECK

SOURCES

[1] Walrabenstein W, et al. Rheumatology (Oxford), 2023. A multidisciplinary lifestyle program for rheumatoid arthritis: the "Plants for Joints" randomized controlled trial. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36617162/

[2] Wagenaar CA, et al. RMD Open, 2024. Long-term effectiveness of a lifestyle intervention for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis: 1-year follow-up of the "Plants for Joints" randomised clinical trial. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38413171/

[3] Kjeldsen-Kragh J, et al. The Lancet, 1991. Controlled trial of fasting and one-year vegetarian diet in rheumatoid arthritis. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1681264/

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