

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: EATING GREEN

Eating healthier protects you and the planet

Health professionals recommend a balanced diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy proteins. A healthy diet goes hand-in-hand with minimizing your carbon foodprint – the greenhouse gas emissions produced by growing, farming, processing, transporting, storing, cooking and disposing of the food you eat.

Greening your diet means understanding the impacts of the food you eat. Eating a kilogram of red meat has a much larger impact than eating the same portion of seasonal vegetables.

Food (high to low emissions)	Car miles that produce emissions = to 1 kg of food
Lamb	95
Beef	66
Cheese	33
Pork	29
Turkey	27
Chicken	17
Tuna	15
Eggs	12
Potatoes	7
Rice	6.5
Nuts	5.5
Beans/tofu	5
Vegetables	5
Milk	4.6
Fruit	2.6
Lentils	2

Data from: Environmental Work Group's Meat Eater's Guide, and EPA's "Greenhouse Gas Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle" (EPA-410-F-14-040a, May 2014).

Eating to promote your health and reduce your carbon foodprint is not a daunting task. Did you know that the average diet of meat lovers and vegans is already more than 50% identical? You do not have to give up meat to make a difference!

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

To reduce health risks and carbon emissions from your diet:

1. **Consume less red meat.** Designate "meatless" days or substitute proteins like poultry, fish, lentils, beans and nuts for more emission-intensive red meats. Reducing beef consumption can:
 - Decrease your risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.
 - Conserve water - production of a pound of beef requires 4,000-18,000 gallons of water, compared to 500 gallons for a pound of chicken.
2. **Stop throwing away your money.** The government estimates that 27% of all food (by weight) produced for people in the United States is either thrown away or used for a lower-value purpose, like animal feed.
3. **Eat lower on the food chain.** Your diet and carbon footprint will both be improved by consuming foods lower on the food chain. Examples of food lower on the food chain include vegetables, beans, eggs, sardines, tofu.
4. **Use the tap.** Drink tap or filtered water to save money and avoid large carbon emissions and waste produced by bottled water.
5. **Buy seasonally.** If you know a product is out of season in your local area, do not buy it. Importing food from other states and countries can substantially increase the carbon emissions associated with that product.
6. **Shop wisely.** Make smart decisions while shopping for food. Come with a shopping list to avoid impulse purchases and buy in bulk to save money and reduce packaging.
7. **Remember to recycle.** Recycle food and beverage packaging whenever possible.

Data on water requirements from the U.S. Geological Survey, <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/activity-watercontent.php>.