



Climate protection and health with every bite - Planetary Health Diet

The Planetary Health Diet can keep society healthy, is individually customisable and makes a decisive contribution to climate protection.

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Explainer videos

The media contribution was created by Annika Tuchelt as part of her degree in Global Food, Nutrition and Health (M.Sc.) at the University of Bayreuth for the Ernährungsradar project and is published online in the E-Tutor section. The video consists of her own film and image material. The video was animated with the help of Canva.com. Images purchased from shutterstock.com were also used. Subtitles for the video are available in German and English and can be switched on and off via the YouTube settings.

English translation of the German explainer video transcript

For many years, stakeholders from politics, science and business, but also people like you and me, have been asking what we can do to maintain a healthy planet both now and in the future.

In 2015, 37 experts from different disciplines came together to develop a diet that promises to feed ten billion people within the Earth's ecological limits, while also preventing about 11 million premature deaths worldwide each year. Wow, those are great promises. Sounds almost too good to be true. If you want to know what such a diet should look like and how it comes to such promises, then stay tuned now.

Our society is facing an extremely complex and difficult challenge. Climate change is advancing, and the consequences are already being felt. I am sure you have all heard of floods and hurricanes on several occasions. The accumulation of such incidents is directly related to climate change. And they will not remain isolated cases in the future. The goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100 is not impossible, but it requires a great deal of commitment and far-reaching changes in all regions of the world.

In addition, diet-associated diseases are a major burden on society. In Europe alone, more than two million deaths from cardiovascular diseases are due to an unhealthy diet.

But what will this look like in the future? According to forecasts, there will be around ten billion people on the planet in 2050, which means another two billion people more than today. So, it is obvious that diverse and innovative changes will be needed. But let's now take a look at a promising approach where each individual can make a difference.

Every day we are faced with the decision of what to put on our plates. This decision is not only a matter of taste but can also be a decision for a healthy body and a healthy planet. The Planetary Health Diet shows us how this should work. But what exactly does this "diet" comprise and what should it look like? First, the word "diet" does not mean losing weight, in the context of which the word is often used, but simply a certain way of eating.

To simplify things, let's take this still empty plate and gradually fill it with food. The most important component of every meal are vegetables and fruit. Therefore, half of the plate should consist of exactly this food group. It is up to you which vegetables or fruit you choose. Of course, the best vegetables and fruit are those that have been produced regionally and seasonally in order to avoid long transport routes and thus reduce the production of greenhouse gases such as CO₂. First and foremost, however, it should taste good.

The other half of the plate should consist mainly of whole grains, such as wholemeal pasta, bread or oatmeal, starchy carbohydrates, such as potatoes, and vegetable proteins, such as beans, peas, or lentils. In addition, healthy fats, for example from nuts or vegetable oils such as rapeseed oil, should not be missing. Animal foods, such as eggs, meat, fish, or dairy products, or added sugar, which we find in most sweets, for example, are not forbidden, but should be consumed in as small quantities as possible and remain an exception. For more information or recipe inspiration, please scan this QR code or click on the link in the info box.

The diet is intended to be applicable to people from a wide range of cultures and countries. Therefore, there are no strict rules regarding specific foods. These should be selected according to availability and taste. Only the recommendations on food groups and their share in a meal should be adhered to as far as possible so that the intended goals of the Planetary Health Diet can be achieved. The experts were particularly concerned with the ease of use and flexibility of the concept. As many people as possible in the most diverse life situations should be able to eat this way. Therefore, the recommendations should be seen more as a broad guideline and less as strict rules.

The Planetary Health Diet should be able to keep society healthy as well as feed ten billion people within planetary boundaries. But how exactly is this supposed to work with the help of our daily diet? The Commission's experts assumed that the majority of society follows such a diet and modelled the resulting effects on climate and health. They concluded that 19 to 24 percent of all premature deaths worldwide could be avoided.

The influence of food production on the climate is great, and so is its potential for positive change. For example, a quarter of all CO₂ emissions can be attributed to food production. In its report, the Commission sets various limits for climate processes such as CO₂ emissions or land use that food production should not exceed in order to mitigate the risk of irreversible climate change. These guideline values can be met with the Planetary Health Diet. In addition, appropriate food choices contribute to a halving of food waste. This reduction, together with a transition to a plant-dominated diet and the optimisation of food production processes, can make it possible to feed a whole ten billion people in a healthy and balanced way.

Impressive what a powerful tool our daily diet can be in the fight against climate change and disease, isn't it? With the help of a balanced and plant-based diet, such as the Planetary Health Diet, every individual can do something good for themselves and the planet at every meal, and without sacrificing anything or incurring high costs.

Infobox:

<https://eatforum.org/planetary-health-recipes/>

Literature

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