

How a Vegan Diet Changed My Future

by Regina Montgomery

I struggled with pain throughout my body for over a year. I went to the doctor and was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis... a depressing diagnosis. I researched the medications the doctor wanted me to take for the arthritis and found they had side effects that I wasn't willing to inflict upon myself, so I refused to take the medications. I dealt with the pain the best I could with Aleve and then finally had to take prescription pain medications to cope with it. I was only in my 40's, I was in a new marriage, and had a 9 year old daughter, but my future looked bleak.

I was also carrying extra weight that I really wanted to lose, so I was working out on the treadmill every day, in spite of the pain. It was really hard, and the worst part was I wasn't losing any weight!

The final straw came one day in November 2009, when I was in so much pain that I went to bed as soon as I got home from my work as a nurse in the hospital. I stayed in bed all night and all

the next day. I hurt so much I couldn't get out of bed. I had to do something.

The next time I went to work, I talked with a co-worker about my situation and she recommended that I read [*Eat to Live*, by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.](#) Another co-worker had the book and let me borrow it so I could get started reading right away. She also loaned me another book called [*The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.](#)



I started reading *Eat to Live* and didn't quit until I finished it. We went out to eat that night and I even took the book with me and read during dinner. (Pain is a great motivator!) When I finished that book, I started on *The China*

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Study. I learned that I needed to eat a plant-based diet of whole foods, so I immediately began eating this way.

I told my husband what I was learning and he and my daughter were totally supportive. He said they would eat whatever I fixed. For awhile I fixed mostly vegetables and fruits because I didn't know much about vegan cooking.

I spent so much time reading that I

stopped working out on the treadmill, but in spite of that, I started losing weight immediately! I couldn't believe it. I lost a pound per day for awhile, even though I was eating a lot of food and wasn't at all hungry. Later I began eating more grains. My weight loss slowed down and then leveled off at a weight I'm very comfortable with. I've lost 18 pounds, which is lighter than I've been since before I was pregnant.

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My pain diminished over a period of a few weeks and just stopped! I forget all about it now, and only have an occasional twinge. My energy level went through the roof! My blood pressure dropped over 40 points, and my cholesterol also went down. I feel younger and am having so much fun! I even went sledding with my daughter and was screaming like one of the kids. What a difference from just a few months ago!

In January I began taking the [Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes](#). They were a great help. Not only did they cement the information I had learned in the books, but I learned new ways to put foods together in delicious combinations. Cooking became a fun adventure. I also learned from listening to the experiences of the other students in class. As someone in class said, you can read 1000 books, but what makes a difference is hearing people's stories.

Now I feel free! I no longer fear my future. My stress level has dropped, not only from the pain relief, but also from my concern over my clothes not fitting and not

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looking like I wanted to look. I feel young again! I can't really imagine not having made this lifestyle change. My life is so different now. I feel 100 percent better. And I deeply appreciate how much loving support and patience my family has shown me.