

Contacts: Tracy Hampton • (312) 339-9067 • thampton@nasw.org
Christine Feheley • (202) 640-4638 • cfeheley@asn-online.org

FOLLOWING A HEALTHY PLANT-BASED DIET MAY LOWER KIDNEY DISEASE RISK

Highlights

- In middle-aged adults, following a healthy plant-based diet was linked with a lower risk of developing chronic kidney disease.
- Following an overall plant-based diet or a healthy plant-based diet was linked with experiencing a slower decline in kidney function.

Washington, DC (April 25, 2019) — A new study has uncovered a link between plant-based diets and kidney health. The finding, which appears in an upcoming issue of *CJASN*, indicates that consuming a diet based on nutrient-rich plants may help protect against the development of chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The consumption of plant-based diets is becoming more common for ethical, environmental, and health reasons. The quality of plant sources of food can differ, however, with nutrient-rich plants being more healthful and plants that are high in refined carbohydrates being less healthful.

Emerging evidence suggests that the risk of chronic conditions varies by types of plant-based diets. To evaluate the associations between plant-based diets and the development of CKD in a general population, a team led by Hyunju Kim and Casey M. Rebholz, PhD (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) analyzed information on 14,686 middle-aged adults enrolled in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities study.

Among the major findings:

- During a median follow-up of 24 years, 4,343 new cases of CKD occurred.
- Participants with the highest adherence to a healthy plant-based diet had a 14% lower risk of developing CKD than participants with the lowest adherence to a healthy plant-based diet.
- Participants with the highest adherence to a less healthy plant-based diet had an 11% higher risk of developing CKD than participants with the lowest adherence to a less healthy plant-based diet.
- The association between plant-based diets and CKD risk was especially pronounced for participants who had a normal weight at the start of the study.

- Higher adherence to an overall plant-based diet and a healthy plant-based diet was associated with slower kidney function decline.

“For kidney disease risk, it appears to be important to choose healthy options for plant sources of food, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes,” said Dr. Rebholz. “Also, our finding of a significant interaction by weight status at baseline suggests that following a healthy eating pattern may be particularly beneficial before becoming overweight or obese.”

In an accompanying Patient Voice editorial, Patrick Gee describes his dietary experiences as a person who spent 4.5 years on peritoneal dialysis and is now approximately 2 years into a kidney transplant. He found plant-based diets to be lacking in several areas and has settled on the ketogenic diet, which is very low in carbohydrates, high in fat, and moderate in protein.

Study co-authors include Hyunju Kim, MPH, Laura E. Caulfield, PhD, Vanessa Garcia-Larsen, PhD, Lyn M. Steffen, PhD, Morgan E. Grams, MD, PhD, and Josef Coresh, MD, PhD.

Disclosures: The authors reported no financial disclosures.

The article, entitled “Plant-Based Diets and Incident CKD and Kidney Function,” will appear online at <http://cjasn.asnjournals.org/> on April 25, 2019, doi: 10.2215/CJN.12391018.

The editorial, entitled “End Risk of Kidney Disease,” will appear online at <http://cjasn.asnjournals.org/> on April 25, 2019.

The content of this article does not reflect the views or opinions of The American Society of Nephrology (ASN). Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s). ASN does not offer medical advice. All content in ASN publications is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions, or adverse effects. This content should not be used during a medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Please consult your doctor or other qualified health care provider if you have any questions about a medical condition, or before taking any drug, changing your diet or commencing or discontinuing any course of treatment. Do not ignore or delay obtaining professional medical advice because of information accessed through ASN. Call 911 or your doctor for all medical emergencies.

Since 1966, ASN has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has more than 20,000 members representing 131 countries. For more information, please visit www.asn-online.org or contact the society at 202-640-4660.

###

The American Society of Nephrology®, ASN®, Kidney Week®, CJASN®, JASN®, NephSAP®, and ASN Kidney News® are registered trademarks of ASN

Tweet: Following a healthy plant-based diet may lower kidney disease risk.
@JohnsHopkinsEPI
@JHUWelchCenter

Facebook: A new study has uncovered a link between plant-based diets and kidney health. The finding, which appears in *CJASN*, indicates that consuming a diet based on nutrient-rich plants may help protect against the development of chronic kidney disease.

Media contact:
Barbara Benham
Media & Public Relations
bbenham1@jhu.edu