The New Potato

7 Vegetarian Proteins

Hey, It's Meatless Monday.

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From Dr. Daryl Gioffre

You might think of a lean chicken breast or a piece of fish as diet food, but meat is actually one of the biggest culprits of acid you could consume. Though I follow a mostly plant-based diet and believe it to be the best option for maintaining an alkaline body, I won't tell you to cast off meat completely — I get it, you like your occasional steak or sushi!

One way to limit your consumption of meat is to declare one day of vegetarianism per week… a "meatless Monday" of sorts. But how will you get your protein? That's always the question. Vegetarians who merely replace meat with pasta and carbohydrates are some of the unhealthiest people around.

On nights you're feeling lazy, "meatless Monday" can turn into "pasta dinner Monday" and those kinds of carbs are full of sugar (sugar=acid). The reality is that most meat eaters get twice the amount of protein they actually need, and the research shows that can lead to osteoporosis, kidney disease, calcium stones in the urinary tract, and has even been linked to cancer.

That being said, it doesn't take much to give your body the nutrients it needs even after giving up meat, as long as you aren't just trading in that portion of the food pyramid for empty carbs.

Scroll through the slideshow above to discover these great sources of complete alkaline proteins.

Edamame (protein per cup = 8 grams): Rich in fiber, protein and essential amino acids, steamed soybeans are also highly alkaline because of their magnesium content. However, make sure you're buying the organic, non-GMO kind, because 90 percent of soy products are genetically modified.

Hemp Seeds (protein per 2 tbsp. = 10 grams): Studies show that the amount of protein and fiber in hemp might help fight off heart disease, obesity and metabolic syndrome. They're packed with alkaline minerals such as magnesium, zinc, iron and calcium, too.

Chia Seeds (protein per 2 tbsp. = 5 grams): Chia seeds are one of the highest plant-based source of omega-3 fatty acids which research shows can decrease the risk of heart disease, and they contain more fiber than flax seeds or nuts. Thanks to chia seeds blood-sugar stabilizing ratio of protein, fats and fiber, they're the perfect hunger-busting addition to your diet, and can help you lose inches in your waistline. Add it to smoothies or sprinkle on your morning oatmeal.

Ezekiel bread (protein per 2 slices = 8 grams): Sprouted grains like barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt make this particular type of bread far more fibrous and nutritional than your average Pepperidge Farm. Even though there is a miniscule amount of gluten, the good benefits of Ezekiel bread far outweigh the bad.

Beans (protein content for mung = 14 grams; black = 15 grams; kidney = 15 grams; navy = 16 grams; white = 17 grams; adzuki = 17 grams; lentils = 18 grams): Beans are a no-brainer source of non-animal protein. They're also high in fiber, antioxidants, iron, zinc, calcium and more, not to mention they're inexpensive and versatile, so incorporate them into your meatless meals this week!

Quinoa (protein per cup = 8 grams): Did you know that quinoa isn't a grain like rice or pasta? It's actually a seed from a plant related to spinach, Swiss chard and beets. Use it to hearten up a salad or as a thickening agent in your stir-fry.

Hummus (protein per 2 tbsp. = 3 grams): Chickpeas and tahini are individually incomplete proteins, but when combined into this tasty spread, they create a complete protein. Just be cautious of the acidic ingredients store-bought brands may contain.

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