



The McDougall Program Cohort: The Largest Study of the Benefits from a Medical Dietary Intervention

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It Took Three Years to Get Published

All of the collected data from people attending the McDougall Program between 2002 and 2011 was analyzed in the year 2011 for this research project. After that, a written paper was submitted to some of the most respected medical journals, including the British Medical Journal and the Annals of Internal Medicine. We were very happy when the Nutrition Journal accepted our article because this is an "open access" publication, which means everyone can read the article for free. You will find papers published by the Nutrition Journal listed in the US National Medical Library a(www.pubmed.gov). Another plus about this journal is that they do not accept research done on animals; a statement of concern for animal rights. Their mission statement fits well with the McDougall mission: "The journal aims to encourage scientists and physicians of all fields to publish results that challenge current models, tenets or dogmas."
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Important Medical Findings Achieved in Seven Days from Eating the McDougall Diet

Average weight loss was 3.1 pounds while eating unrestricted amounts of food

Average cholesterol reduction was 22 mg/dL

An average decrease of 18/11 mmHg in blood pressure in patients with hypertension (140/90 or greater)

Nearly 90% of patients were able to get off blood pressure and diabetic medications

Please note that the more overweight and unhealthy the persons were at the beginning of the program, the more favorable were their results were at the end. For example, when cholesterol began at over 240 mg/dL, the reduction seen was 39 mg/dL, whereas cholesterol levels at less than 150 mg/dL at the beginning experienced an 8 mg/dL decrease in a week.

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The image shows the front page of a research article in the Nutrition Journal. At the top, it says 'McDougall et al. Nutrition Journal 2014, 13:89' and 'http://www.nutritionjournal.com/content/13/1/89'. The journal logo is on the right. Below the journal name, there are 'RESEARCH' and 'Open Access' labels. The title is 'Effects of 7 days on an ad libitum low-fat vegan diet: the McDougall Program cohort'. The authors listed are John McDougall, Laura L Thomas, Craig McDougall, Gavin Motoney, Bradley Saif, John S Finkel, Kelly Richardson, and Karolin Mae Pearson. The abstract follows, detailing the background, methods, results, and conclusions of the study. The introduction section is also visible, discussing the goal of health care and the prevalence of chronic diseases in industrialized nations.

Gain a Pound a Day on a Cruise or Lose Half a Pound a Day with Dr. McDougall

People are unable to lose weight because hunger is, by nature's design, painful. Dieters are in denial of this biologic fact and as a result "they fail." Attendees of the McDougall Program are encouraged to eat as much delicious food as they want, three or more times a day. They often go back to the buffet line for thirds and fourths. This kind of unrestricted eating on a cruise ship translates into seven pounds, or more, of weight gain in seven days. However, because of the composition of the McDougall meals—very low in fat and high in carbohydrate—people effortlessly, without any thoughts of deprivation, lose 3.1 pounds (1.4 Kg) on average per week. That could mean 12 pounds in a month

and 150 pounds in a year. The Star McDougallers website page shows that this is the result for many people who once considered themselves hopelessly obese.



Is Seven Days Too Short to Be Meaningful?

One common criticism of our recently published paper is that long-term compliance and benefits are unknown. So what! The intention of the study was to report the effects of one week of healthy eating—no more and no less. What happens in the future is a matter for another scientific paper.

Many, but not all, patients continued to follow the diet after leaving us. I know from my 40 years of experience as a physician that the McDougall Program permanently changes many lives. Also a report from an independent analysis by investigators at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU in Portland, OR) showed very high compliance after attending the McDougall Program in Santa Rosa, CA: 80% of people followed the diet 100% of the time for a year. (Behavioral changes maintained for more than six months are often permanent.)

This kind of dramatic, early success can be important for maintaining patients' motivation to adhere to the diet in the future. These rapid results will also motivate physicians to prescribe diet therapy before resorting to the pharmacy in order to help their patients.

Most Benefits Were Not Reported

Our recent study did not record the subjective improvements seen in participants, including the relief from fatigue, arthritis, headaches, stomachaches, body aches, indigestion, and constipation. For most people the liberation from debilitating physical and psychological pains was far more appreciated than any of the changes in numbers (cholesterol, blood pressure, etc.) that were reported.

The study did document changes in numbers (biomarkers) that suggested improvement in the function of the heart, blood vessels, and kidneys. By giving credit only to the numbers, however, the big picture is often overlooked: This huge change in diet prescribed at the McDougall Program caused the removal of the burdens of food poisons, primarily animal foods and vegetable oils, that were sickening and killing our patients. For at least seven days, these 1,615 people were healing: Their minds and bodies were regaining lost functions and their appearances were improving. I have no doubt that most of them, once introduced to this alternative, continue the healing processes once they returned home.

Limitations and Strengths of the Study

A limitation of the study may be that those attending the McDougall Program may not represent the general population. These were self-selected people who had the time and money to travel to Santa Rosa, CA for 10 days. The financial cost for the Program likely reflects a higher income stratum. Higher incomes are commonly associated with other measures of success such as higher education levels. All of these factors may have contributed to the decision of participants to try a low-fat vegan diet.

However, a strength of the study is that complete raw data was used. By including essentially all attendees in the analysis, this method removes the important bias of selectively excluding unfavorable results that may have occurred during the McDougall Program.

More Research Is Not Needed

The McDougall Cohort is the largest database ever published on a closely supervised, physician-directed, therapeutic low-fat diet. No future publications of similar size are expected. The scientific research performed over the past

century clearly and consistently shows the benefits of a diet based on starches with vegetable and fruits, and the harms caused by the consumption of animal foods and vegetable oils. There is no need for another study to be published in order for patients, physicians, health organizations, insurance companies, and government bodies to take long-overdue actions. This Nutrition Journal article provides a practical model for health promotion within the healthcare system: an intensive week-long residential educational program. We believe that this simple dietary approach can improve patients' health, ultimately reduce healthcare costs, and help the world become a better place to live.

Featured Recipes

Holiday Meal Planning

A Reprint from the McDougall Newsletter - October 2005

This time of year, the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays frighten many people who eat a healthy diet. They wonder how to socialize with friends and how to prepare a meal in their home. These two days are supposed to be the largest feasts of the year. Yet in fact, both dinners are the healthiest, most vegetarian-like, most McDougall-like meals people eat all year long. Traditionally, these holiday dinners consist of mashed white potatoes, roasted sweet potatoes, a bread stuffing, butternut and acorn squash, cranberries, and a variety of green vegetables, including Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, and green beans. For dessert, pumpkin pie ends the feast. That's a cornucopia of starches and vegetables. The turkey served is the leanest of all common meats. The truth is that every other dinner consumed by Westerners all year long is far richer in fat, cholesterol, salt and sugar than is eaten at these two traditional festivals. Therefore, if you are a healthy eater you will find Thanksgiving and Christmas the two most comfortable times of the year to socialize with all of your family and friends. I have laid out the menu, shopping list, and time schedule so that you will be able to more easily prepare a successful meal. The starred (*) items are ones I suggest for a basic meal plan, and then add as many more dishes as you feel your Thanksgiving dinner needs to fit your celebration.

MENU:

Creamy Pumpkin Soup (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Prepare this up to two days ahead without the soy milk and refrigerate. Reheat in microwave or on stovetop. Add the soy milk after the soup is heated through.

Tossed Green Salad with assorted dressings

Success Tip: Prepare dressings three to four days in advance and refrigerate. Or buy your favorite non-fat salad dressings. Buy organic baby greens in bags and toss in a bowl just before serving.

* Holiday Stuffed Pumpkin (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Buy pumpkin in October or early November for the best selection. Keep in a cool place. Buy extra pumpkins for use at other times during the winter months. Choose one of the many varieties available at this time of the year. One of my favorites is the "ghost" pumpkin with its white skin and orange flesh. The traditional pumpkin for carving a jack-o-lantern is not the tastiest choice for use as a stuffed pumpkin, although I have used them when nothing else was available. Clean the pumpkin the day before use and refrigerate, but do not stuff until just before baking. If you do not have enough room to refrigerate the cleaned pumpkin then clean it just before stuffing. Cube the bread the night before and allow it to sit out overnight so the bread dries out slightly. This step helps to make the stuffing mixture nicely moist, but not mushy.

* Mashed Potatoes (newsletter July 2004 & October 2004)

Success Tip: Peel potatoes in the morning and store in water to cover until cooking time. Drain off all cooking water. Use a handheld electric mixer and add warmed soymilk while beating. Place mashed potatoes into a warmed bowl before serving. For garlic mashed potatoes, add some of the Elephant Garlic Spread to the potatoes while mashing.

Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: These may be made two days ahead of time and refrigerated in a covered casserole dish. Reheat in microwave just before serving.

* Golden Gravy (newsletter October 2003)

Success Tip: This may be made a day ahead of time and reheated slowly on the stovetop, stirring frequently.

Rich Brown Gravy (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Brown the onions and flour a day or two ahead of time, then cover and refrigerate. Finish the recipe as directed, realizing that it will take a bit more time for the liquid to heat through.

Whole Wheat & Sourdough Rolls with Elephant Garlic Spread (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Order your rolls from Whole Foods or a bakery about one week early, then pick them up the day before the holiday. Make the garlic spread one or two days ahead of time and refrigerate until serving.

* Cranberry Sauce (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Make two to three days ahead of time and refrigerate until just before serving.

* Green Beans

Success Tip: Trim beans the day before and store in the refrigerator. Wash just before steaming. I usually serve these plain with a bit of salt and pepper.

Brussels Sprouts with Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing (newsletter July 2003)

Success Tip: Trim these a day or two before cooking and store in the refrigerator. Wash before cooking. Most people like these best with some type of a sauce, although Heather and I like them plain with only a bit of salt. Make the dressing one to two days ahead and store in the refrigerator. Pour a small amount of the dressing over the cooked Brussels sprouts and toss just before serving.

* Pumpkin Pie with Vanilla Cream Sauce (newsletter October 2003)

Success Tip: Make the pie and the sauce one day ahead and refrigerate until just before serving. We like this pie best chilled. If you like warm pumpkin pie, you will need to make this just before serving. The crust can be prepared one day early and refrigerated. Mix the filling ingredients together, cover and refrigerate overnight, then pour into the crust and bake. The vanilla sauce should be served chilled over the pie.

Wicked Chocolate Pie (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Make this one day early and refrigerate. The toppings may be made two days ahead, if desired. This needs to be served chilled.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Shop for the non-perishable items about a week ahead of time. These are the canned and packaged products, such as vegetable broth, canned pumpkin, flour, silken tofu and any dried herbs and spices that you may need. Potatoes, sweet potatoes and garlic can be purchased ahead of time as long as you have a cool place to store them (not the refrigerator). Choose the menu items that you want to include for your Thanksgiving feast, then look through the recipes. Check over this shopping list as you go through the recipes, and make sure you also have the pantry items available. Shop for your perishable items no more than 2 days before the holiday, if possible.

SHOPPING LIST

The following shopping lists are for the complete menu above. You will have to adjust the items needed depending on what you plan to prepare.

CANNED AND PACKAGED PRODUCTS

These may be purchased ahead of time and stored in your pantry or refrigerator.

- 4-5 boxes (32 oz.) vegetable broth
- 2 cans (15-16 oz.) pumpkin
- 1 jar (12 oz.) applesauce
- 3 containers (32 oz.) soy or rice milk
- 1 jar (8 oz.) pure maple syrup
- 5 packages (12.3 oz.) Lite Silken Tofu-Extra Firm
- 2 cups non-dairy chocolate chips
- 1 bag (16 oz.) Sukanat
- 1 jar (16 oz.) Wonderslim Fat Replacer
- 1 bag (16 oz.) frozen raspberries
- 1 cup unsalted roasted cashews
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 container (32 oz.) orange juice
- 1 jar (4 oz.) capers

FRESH INGREDIENTS

The first nine ingredients may be purchased ahead of time. Buy the fresh vegetables and bread products the day before, if possible.

- 4 onions
- 1 bunch celery
- 1 head garlic
- 2 heads elephant garlic
- 5 pounds potatoes
- 3 pounds yams or sweet potatoes
- 1 bag fresh cranberries
- 1 small pumpkin (to serve the soup in-optional)
- 1 medium-large pumpkin
- Bagged organic baby greens
- 2 pounds green beans
- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts
- 1 large loaf whole wheat bread
- 6-8 whole wheat or sourdough rolls

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED

These are used in several of the recipes and are things that you probably already have in your pantry. Check over this list and purchase anything that you don't have.

- Tabasco sauce
- Curry powder
- Soy sauce (at least 1 cup)
- Tahini
- Vanilla
- Whole wheat flour
- Unbleached white flour
- Cornstarch
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Golden brown sugar
- Sugar
- Dijon mustard
- Pumpkin pie spice
- Cinnamon
- Ground ginger
- Ground cloves
- Parsley flakes

Sage
Marjoram
Thyme
Bay leaves
Poultry seasoning
Rosemary
Soy Parmesan cheese
Lemon juice

TIME SCHEDULE

1 week ahead:

Shop for non-perishable items and some of the perishable foods listed above.
Order rolls from bakery.

3 days ahead:

Make salad dressings.
Make cranberry sauce.

2 days ahead:

Shop for vegetables and whole wheat bread.
Make Creamy Pumpkin Soup.
Bake sweet potatoes or yams and prepare Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes.
Make Elephant Garlic Spread.
Make Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing.
Make the raspberry sauce and the almond topping for the chocolate pie.

1 day ahead:

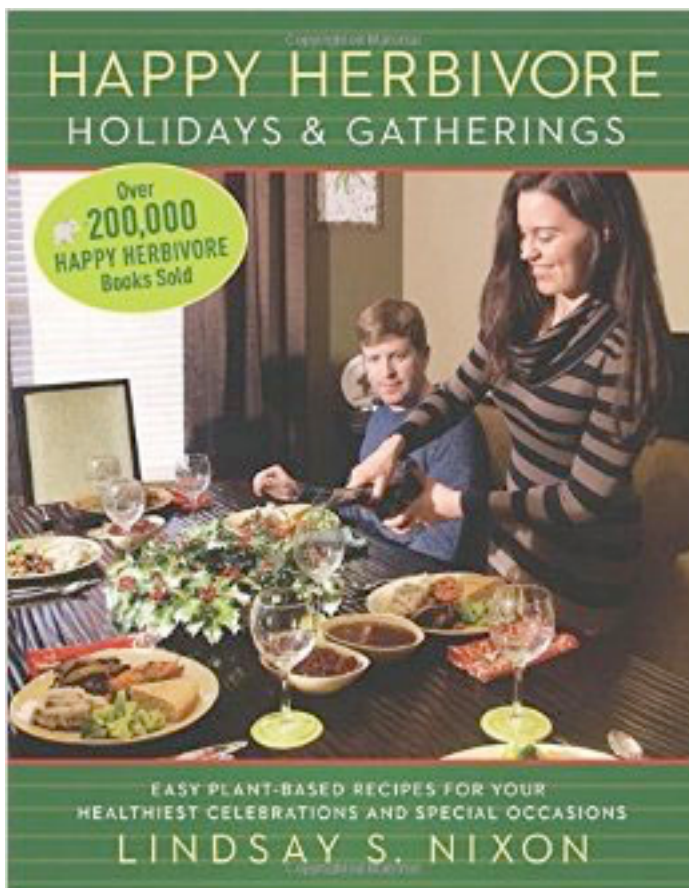
Pick up the pre-ordered rolls.
Make the pumpkin pie and vanilla sauce.
Make the chocolate pie.
Trim the green beans and Brussels sprouts.
Make the Golden Gravy.
Partially make the brown gravy.
Cube the bread and allow to sit out overnight

Thanksgiving (Morning):

Peel potatoes and place in cold water to cover.
Clean out pumpkins.
Make stuffing mixture and stuff pumpkin.

Thanksgiving (Afternoon):

Take sweet potatoes and soup out of refrigerator.
Place pumpkin in oven and bake as directed.
Cook potatoes and mash.
Wash vegetables and cook.
Finish brown gravy and slowly reheat Golden Gravy.
Reheat mashed sweet potatoes.
Finish soup and heat.
Place baby greens in bowl. Serve with dressings.
Heat rolls and garlic spread.
Don't forget the cranberry sauce.



Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings by Lindsay S. Nixon
Available in Paperback, Kindle, Nook & eBooks
<http://herbi.es/HHHoliday>

Bestselling vegan author Lindsay S. Nixon brings "healthy" and "holidays" together in her new book, Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings, filled with easy recipes that celebrate and define our favorite occasions throughout the year. From an elaborate, crowd-pleasing Thanksgiving, to a no-fuss, but

dazzling New Year's Eve or cocktail party, to omnivore-approved potlucks such as Super Bowl Sunday, to summer fresh barbecues and picnics, and quick-fix casual dinner parties or lazy Sunday brunches with friends... Including more than 130 recipes, with new and old favorites, Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings guarantees you'll have healthy, festive, deliciously memorable meal, whatever you're celebrating!

Twelve different special occasions are covered in detail with more than two dozen menus and detailed, step-by-step instructions so your party planning is easy and effortless. Nixon's fuss-free, fast recipes are also weeknight practical, so you can enjoy all her hearty main dishes, savory sides, sweet treats, all year long.

True to Lindsay's beloved "everyday" cooking style, Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings focuses on using only whole, unprocessed plant foods, with no added oils or fats, or wacky, hard-to-find ingredients. She makes it easy to impress guests while also celebrating health--and without breaking the bank.

Say yes to Portobella Pot Roast, Thanksgiving Loaf, Hot Chocolate Muffins, Mini Corn Dog Bites, BBQ Sliders, Cauliflower Hot Wings, Cherry Tart Brownies, Lemon Rosemary Meatballs, Beet Salad, Banana "Cake" Pops, Mini Quiche, Waffles and more.... with Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings, your healthy, hearty dishes will be the life of the party!

Butternut Soup

I can't help myself. I have to include a butternut soup in every cookbook I write. This recipe is my new favorite, and it's a little edgy for Thanksgiving. If you want to go a bit more traditional, skip the chilies and lime, and add cinnamon (or pumpkin pie spice) to taste with a light drizzle of maple syrup. Or if you don't want a sweet, pumpkin-pie-tasting soup, add mild curry powder to taste—yes! Just three ingredients! Ka-pow!

Total Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 60 minutes

Serves: 2 to 4

Butternut Soup

1 butternut squash

2-4 c vegetable broth

1 4-oz can green chilies

1-2 limes

Preheat oven to 375° F. Slice squash in half lengthwise and place cut side down on a cookie sheet. Bake until fork-tender and skin is starting to brown (about 30-40 minutes). Once cool enough to handle, scoop out and discard seeds. Then scoop flesh away from skin and transfer to a blender, working in batches if necessary. Blend squash with broth as necessary to achieve a silky smooth soup consistency. Then blend in green chilies. Reheat the soup on low on the stovetop if necessary. Season with salt and pepper if desired. Squeeze fresh lime juice over top before serving.

Thanksgiving Loaf

I've never had Tofurkey, and while my family has become pretty adventurous over the years, no amount of persuasion is going to get them to eat tofu shaped into a turkey mold. (Just sayin'.) If you want a centerpiece to your meal that doesn't pretend to be turkey, this Thanksgiving Loaf is where it's at. While this loaf doesn't taste anything like meatloaf (or turkey), it captures all the Thanksgiving flavors that we know and love.

Total Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 1 hour

Serves: 4

- 1 15-oz can white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 c mashed potatoes
- 1 carrot
- 1 parsnip (optional)
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 small onion
- 2 1/2 tbsp poultry seasoning (not powdered)
- 1/2 tsp rubbed sage (not powdered)
- 2-3 tbsp nutritional yeast 2-3 tbsp yellow miso*
- 3/4 c instant oats (uncooked)

Preheat oven to 350° F and set aside a standard loaf pan. Pulse beans in a food processor or mash in a bowl with a fork so no whole beans are left, but mixture is still chunky with some bean parts. Transfer to a mixing bowl along with the mashed potatoes and set aside.

Grate, chop, or pulse vegetables in a food processor until finely minced, but do not puree. Add to mixing bowl with seasonings, nutritional yeast, and miso, stirring to combine. Stir in oats and taste, adding additional nutritional yeast or

miso if desired. Transfer combined mixture to your loaf pan, pat down firmly, and bake for 30-40 minutes until firmer and crisp on the top (make sure it's not still wet). Let cool in the pan for 10-20 minutes before serving out of it (while keeping it perfectly intact).

Note: One-use aluminum loaf pans that have ridges on the sides make the prettiest loaves, and it's easier to pop the loaf out of that (and keep it perfectly intact) than a traditional metal pan. While normally I'd prefer not to use something that creates waste, I like a perfect, magazine-looking loaf at Thanksgiving. If using a regular pan, run a knife along the edges, put a plate or cutting board over top, flip over, and pat (bang) the bottom of the pan until your loaf slides out onto the plate or cutting board.

Traditional Stuffing

I created this recipe for the two men in my life who live and die for stuffing at Thanksgiving.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Servings: 8

6 slices of whole-wheat bread

1 c vegetable broth, divided

1 medium onion, chopped

4 celery stalks, sliced or diced

2-3 tbsp Italian seasoning

Leave bread out overnight so it becomes stale (if you forget, toast it, but stale is best). Preheat oven to 350° F. Cube bread. Line a skillet with a thin layer of broth and saute onion and celery until onion is translucent and all the liquid has cooked off. Set aside to cool. In your casserole or baking dish, toss bread cubes with 2 tbsp Italian seasoning. Stir in cooked onion and celery and add more seasoning if desired. (Go on, give it a taste!) Drizzle with 1/4 cup broth and bake for 30 minutes. Check every 10 minutes and add more broth as necessary to prevent stuffing from drying out. (I find the preferred "wetness" of stuffing varies from family to family—do what you like!)

Pumpkin Pie

This pie is incredible. It's totally crustless but still firms up like the real deal so you can cut individual slices without it falling apart. It's like a little Thanksgiving tofu miracle.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Servings: 9

1/2 c silken tofu* (see note)

1 1/2 c nondairy milk

1/2 c silken tofu* (see note)

1 1/2 c nondairy milk

2 tbsp cornstarch

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 c canned pure pumpkin

1/2 c whole-wheat pastry flour* (see note)

2 tsp baking powder

1/2 c brown sugar

1/4 tsp fine salt

3 tsp pumpkin pie spice

Preheat oven to 350° F. Set aside a shallow 9-inch glass pie dish.

In a blender or food processor, blend tofu, nondairy milk, cornstarch, and vanilla until smooth, stopping to scrape sides periodically. Add remaining ingredients and blend for about a minute more until the mixture is uniform and well combined. Pour the mixture into the pie dish and bake for 1 hour. Allow the pie to cool on the counter, away from the hot oven, until it's at room temperature. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight or for at least 4 hours.

CHEF'S NOTES:

- Mori-Nu extra-firm silken tofu works best in this recipe.
- For a soy-free dish, try using 1/2 cup raw cashews (soaked overnight so they blend well) instead of tofu.
- To make this gluten-free, brown rice flour may be substituted for the pastry flour.