

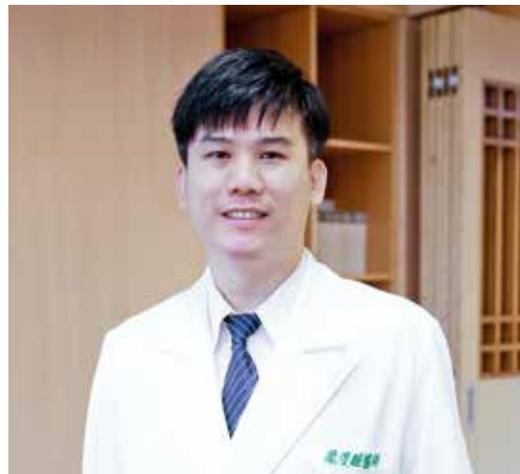
Eat Vegetarian to Achieve Epidemic Prevention

By Mun Kun-Hong, Director of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital

I am a vegetarian for the following three reasons: To cultivate compassion, to make a contribution to environmental protection, and for my own physical well-being.

I once accidentally came across a video clip of animals being slaughtered in a slaughterhouse, which I couldn't bear to watch. Sometimes I ask myself, are epidemics like avian influenza, SARS the revenge of animals and our planet against humanity? Vegetarianism and abstention from killing living beings are the key prerequisites for cultivating compassion. "Compassion has no enemies," if we accumulate good karma to deliver ourselves and others and live in complete harmony with our fellow human beings, the road of life will be wide upon. If we make enemies everywhere, we will stumble at every step.

Climate change has already turned into a climate crisis and the world has gone from occasional fevers to frequent



high fevers, which has resulted in a high frequency of severe natural disasters. Vegetarianism is the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions and cool down our planet. According to the latest statistics, abstention from meat results in a reduction of livestock related GHG emissions by 20 tons annually. Personally, I believe that a rising number of vegetarians will generate a climate of harmony in society, which is our only chance to solve the global climate crisis.

From a medical science

perspective, vegetarian diets lower the risk of cancer by 20%. They also greatly decrease the incidence of cardiovascular sclerosis, strokes, and diabetes. As long as we are not picky eaters and have a balanced intake of fruit, vegetables, and grains, we don't have to worry about malnutrition. A lot of Olympic athletes are vegetarians!

The most obvious difference I noticed after I became a vegetarian was the much lower frequency and severity of acne outbreaks on my face and body. I think this is closely related to the high quantity of anti-inflammatory substances or vitamins in vegetables. In addition, my bowel movements are perfectly smooth, I always feel vitalized and full of energy, and my brain is clearer than before. It is also much easier for me to maintain a balanced mood and I don't angry so easily or I notice quickly that I'm enraged. By subduing my emotions or changing my perspective, I can quickly break free from the vortex of temporary madness. My patience and endurance are also greatly improved.

If meat-eaters are unable to break their habit immediately, they can adopt a gradual approach to become vegetarians. My transition to vegetarianism can be divided into the following three stages:

1. Less meat more veggies: If you substitute bean for meat protein and



After Dr. Mun Kun-Hong made up his mind to embrace vegetarianism, he mastered the art of cooking which brings him joy and happiness.

fresh fruit for beverages or snacks, you will notice after one month that your bowel movements are much smoother.

2. Five pungent spices & ovo-lacto vegetarianism: Instead of setting the bar too high by forcing yourself to become a vegan immediately, you should try to eat vegetarian meals on a consistent basis. I joined a vegetarian club to find out where and when I can



Dr. Mun Kun-Hong has even learned how to handle jackfruit, which is a highly time-consuming process.

eat vegetarian meals whenever I want to ensure a sufficient variety of choices. If I can't find a vegetarian restaurant during a business trip, I choose meat-free or semi-vegetarian meals.

3. Gradually increased frequency: I recommend slowly raising the frequency from three days a week to five days a week to a daily vegetarian diet or from one vegetarian meal a day to two meals and finally three meals a day. Later on, I learned how to cook and craft delicious meals together with my kids and thereby build positive interactions with them. You'll find that self-prepared meals are nutritious and tasty!

As a matter of fact, my and my family's experience in the field of vegetarianism is by no means extensive. It has only been slightly over two years since we began our training. In view of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic which broke out in 2019 is still raging, we should heed Master Cheng Yen's appeal to engage in pious prayers, fasting, and abstention from meat. This epidemic has opened our

eyes to the fragility, preciousness, and uncertainty of life. When the epidemic struck, the bodies of the deceased had to be isolated and cremated and buried within a short period of time. Maybe you didn't even get a chance to say goodbye to your loved ones. Due to the fact that 25% of the world population is self-isolating at home, our earth is enjoying a brief respite. The air and oceans in many countries are getting cleaner, which clearly shows us that we are not the masters of this planet. We must live in symbiosis with other living creatures on this planet. By adopting plant-based diets, we can avoid the killing of other living beings and save our mother earth.

Vegetarianism is also one of the best ways to rescue ourselves and maintain our physical well-being. Let's all cooperate and encourage each other in this grand undertaking.

Vegetarianism which is in vogue these days is highly beneficial for humans, society, and our planet. This is a perfect time to start your vegetarian diet!