

Vegetarianism Prevents Diseases



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The long awaited COVID-19 vaccines arrived and the first batch of vaccination was dispatched at the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital near the end of March 2021. While COVID-19 is still threatening the health and lives of the global population, the arrival of vaccines fills peoples' heart with love, warmth, and hope. We are cautious and pious in fighting this pandemic which changes people's lifestyles and habits. Hands washing properly, wearing masks, and social distancing are now becoming routine. We look forward to take off the masks when we are rid of COVID-19.

This year 2021 marks the 55th anniversary of the Tzu Chi Foundation and the 35th anniversary of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. In light of a disaster-ridden planet, we all have a common ambition to uphold "Great lessons to benefit the people, and doing good deeds for peace

in the world." While safeguarding lives, we continue to promote healthy veggie habit and encourage colleagues to participate in study group. Through veggie, we pray for the suffering from disasters and epidemics. Through the study group, we immerse in dharma to cleanse our heart from greed and ignorance. We are steadfast in our duties to march forward hand-in-hand.

Since its establishment, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital not only provides inpatients with healthy meals, but also a team of dietitians to offer assistance to colleagues within the hospital. Through weekly announcements from the dietary department, colleagues can easily follow tips and tricks on veggie nutrition. In recent years, we provide information for various seasons (Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Lidong, Winter Solstice, and Dietitian's

Day). We also have publications like “The 24 Solar Terms (traditional Chinese lunisolar calendars) and Light Vegetables” and “Protecting Kidney with Three meals of healthy vegetarian diet”, and other healthy diet related books in the past 4 years as well as a new vegetarian book specially designed for the elderly to be released this summer.

A proper diet is the first principle to maintain a good balance in physical and mental health. Having a good diet daily with safe ingredients, especially seasonal fruits and vegetables, is invaluable. On the one hand, these are fresh and reasonably inexpensive, but more importantly healthy food leads to good health. This was our original intention when we published “The 24 Solar Terms and Light Vegetables”. This book is still loved by many readers. In the commercial market, more importantly, it is also deeply loved by vegetarians and among veggie circles on the Internet, which highly recommended it.

At Tzu Chi, not only do we promote “vegetarianism”, but we also draw on people’s support from the perspective of good health and protect the environment. In fact, in the Western world, more and more people recognize vegetarian diet can save the earth. Jane Goodall, an internationally renowned conservationist, discovered that the choice of diet is

enough to affect changes in the earth’s environment. She stresses the food power and urges people to become vegetarians.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen worries about the frequent disasters and cannot bear to see its destruction. She urges everyone to promote vegetarianism and protect the environment in order to preserve this planet earth for all beings.

In fact, fruits and vegetables contain large amount of water and fibers. Many nutritionists and doctors have already recommended. Professor Wang Cheng-Yi, an expert of gastroenterology, once spoke for the large intestines (The Cries of the Large Intestine), telling us how to eat for intestines’ sake. Colorectal cancer has ranked first among all cancers in Taiwan for many years. In addition to recommend a colonoscopy for early cancer detection, we should call for a vegetarian diet because it is the simplest solution.

In addition, Taiwan’s dialysis population has exceeded 80,000. The nephrology department of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital published “Healthy Vegetable Therapeutic Diet Three Meals a Day”, hoping to help individuals to easily enjoy the fun of cooking. This book can not only help the dialysis patients, but healthy people can use it to become healthier.

To avoid kidney diseases, the National

Health Agency recommends strict following of the principle - “Three more, Three less, Four no’s, and one not”. This translates to more fibers, more fruits and vegetables, more water, less salt, less sugar, less oil, and don’t smoke, don’t retain urine, don’t stay up late, don’t randomly take medicine, and keep the body fit without “tuna belly”. It is also important to maintain adequate sleep, develop a habit of moderate exercise, maintain moderate weight, and avoid alcohol.

To prevent kidney diseases, the most important thing is to control blood glucose, pressure and lipids in daily life, and stay away from the “Three High” diseases. How do we eat healthy to reduce risks? Clinical nutrition studies have shown that a plant-based diet can effectively improve the “Three High” problems and also improve inflammatory responses in the body. It can not only reduce cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, but also help to improve chronic kidney diseases.

Nowadays, a vegetarian diet is a fashion. It is not only a belief to respect life, but also a way to slow global warming and reduce natural disasters to save the planet. Combined with exercise, it benefits health. There are many books or suggestions about exercise in the market

and on the Internet, and the medical profession has begun to have more precise prescription on the amount of exercise. Hualien Tzu Chi’s Kidney Care Team published this year’s “The Complete Book of the Strongest Rehabilitation Exercise with Scientific Evidence from Chronic Kidney Disease”, which is very helpful to nephrologists or people with weakness in physical strength. This is also the cover story of this issue. Exercise improves the health of empirical nephropathy.

Don’t underestimate the power of vegetarianism. Dharma Master Cheng Yen once said that if only one person is vegetarian for one day, it may not make much difference; however, if one million people make the same choice, the world will be different. The power of vegetarianism implodes with more and more people joining. Each person becomes a “seed”, conveying the important message and spread vegetarianism. Three veggie meals a day is an opportunity to help the earth for sustainability. The future of planet earth and human beings needs everyone’s action now. Become a vegetarian daily to free us from the pandemics and protect the earth.