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PCRM Studies Confirm Weight Loss and Cancer Survival Benefits of Plant-Based Diet

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Two news studies by PCRM experts confirm that a vegan diet is the best diet plan for long-term weight loss and can significantly increase chances of survival after prostate cancer diagnosis.

The first study, published in the September issue of *Obesity*, showed that women who adopt a vegan diet, especially when they receive group support, lose weight and keep it off. The study participants included 64 overweight, postmenopausal women who were randomly assigned to either a low-fat vegan diet or a more conventional low-fat diet following the National Cholesterol Education Program guidelines. Within each diet group, some participants were offered extended group support, while others were not. Meals were not provided and no calorie restrictions were placed on either group.



The vegan group lost a median of 11 pounds at one year, compared with four pounds for the control group. At the two-year mark, the vegan group had lost approximately seven pounds from baseline, compared with approximately two pounds for the control group. Regardless of diet assignment, participants who were offered group support meetings lost more weight over the course of the study than those who did not receive support.

The study was authored by PCRM nutrition scientist Gabrielle M. Turner-McGrievy, M.S., R.D., PCRM president [Neal Barnard, M.D.](#), and Anthony R. Scialli, M.D., of Georgetown University.

The second study, which appeared as the lead article in the September issue of *Nutrition Reviews*, showed that men with prostate cancer who increase consumption of vegetarian foods and avoid dairy

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products and meat may significantly increase their chances of survival.

George Mason University faculty member and PCRM nutrition consultant Susan E. Berkow, Ph.D., C.N.S., examined the findings of eight observational studies and 17 intervention studies on the effect of a plant-based diet on prostate cancer. Results showed that a plant-based diet may slow prostate cancer progression and improve prognosis. Dr. Berkow found that diets high in saturated fat are associated with a threefold higher risk of cancer progression and death, compared with a diet low in saturated fat. In addition, specific plant foods, including flaxseeds and lycopene-rich tomatoes, may help slow prostate cancer progression.

Dr. Berkow wrote the paper along with PCRM president [Neal Barnard, M.D.](#), and [Gordon Saxe, M.D., Ph.D.](#), of the University of California, San Diego.

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