

It Was Time to Take as Good Care of Myself as My Car

Mark Gartell's Vegan Story

Ten years ago I had a physical and found out I had high cholesterol and high blood pressure. I realized then that it was time to take as good care of myself as I did of my car! The doctor prescribed medications for both problems, and with some changes in my job and living situation, I got my blood pressure under control and stopped taking that medication after a couple of years. But I stayed on the cholesterol meds.

The medication did help bring my cholesterol down some, but not enough. On December 30, 2010, my lab tests revealed that my cholesterol was a whopping 355! The other numbers were bad too: My LDL (that's the bad kind) was 238 and my triglycerides were 302. My blood glucose was also a little high, 112, and the doctor said I'd need to watch that.

Fortunately, my wife, Cricket, read [*The China Study*](#), by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.d. She learned that many of the chronic health problems Americans face are caused by the typical meat-based diet, also called the Standard American Diet (SAD). And these problems can actually be reversed by switching to a plant-based diet. She also read [*Eat to Live*](#), by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

This book reinforced what she learned in [*The China Study*](#) and also gave her some specifics about what

to eat, plus some recipes. Armed with this information and the resolve that we could do something to turn my high cholesterol around, we began eating a plant-based diet on Feb. 15.

A friend of Cricket's also told her about the Food for Life Classes and recommended she take them. So Cricket began the Food for Life Diabetes classes the last week of February, 2011. This class really helped her learn how to choose and prepare healthy foods, and she brought the information and recipes home to share with me.

We stuck with the program and I started seeing immediate results. I lost 22 pounds, which helped me feel better. But the most amazing thing was getting lab work

done again on March 21, just 5 weeks after starting the vegan diet. My total cholesterol dropped from 355 to 144! My LDL went from 238 to 74. Triglycerides went from 302 to 72. And my HDL stayed about the same, from 57 to 56. Everything was GREAT! Even my blood glucose went down, from 112 to 83.

My doctor was amazed. He said those results would never be possible just with medication.

Sometimes people tell me, "I could never do this!"

My question is, "Why not?" It's not hard to do and the food tastes great.

This is something I know I will do the rest of my life, and I have a lot of peace of mind knowing that I have reversed the dangerous path I was on.



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