

## **Arnold School Study: Effects of Varying Plant-based Diets on Weight Loss**

Plant-based diets have been previously linked to lower body weights and less weight gain over time. However, prior research has not tested the relationship between these varying diets and body weight.

A new study from the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health, published in *Nutrition*, discovered that in particular, vegan-based plant diets led to the greatest amount of weight loss for research participants.

The study compared weight loss for six months among five groups: vegan, vegetarian, pesco-vegetarian, semi-vegetarian, and omnivorous. The researchers found that the vegan group experienced greater weight loss and decreased their fat and saturated fat at both the two and six month marks.

"Traditional weight loss approaches emphasize calorie reduction by encouraging people to self-monitor their diets," said Dr. Gabrielle Turner-McGrievy faculty of the Arnold School and Affiliated Scholar at the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities and lead author of the study. "This involves daily tracking of energy intake, which can be burdensome for individuals."

Dr. Turner-McGrievy further explained that people on low calorie diets often report being hungry. Plant-based dietary approaches, such as vegan diets, are high in fiber and low in fat, which means they keep individuals full for longer and generally have fewer calories. This allows individuals to eat when they are hungry and until they are full, without having to track calories. This practice may appeal to patients who are resistant to dietary self-monitoring.

In the future, the researchers hope to do a larger trial with longer-term follow-up. This will enable them to assess differences among the groups and study dietary maintenance. In addition, they plan to measure changes in biological markers such as lipids, glucose, and markers of inflammation.

In the meantime, the results of this most recent study have proven to have mass appeal and are being picked up by popular press, such as [The State](#) and [Cosmopolitan](#).