



## Live healthily by adopting a plant-based diet

Eating minimally processed plant and animal foods can help people living with comorbidities to manage and prevent lifestyle diseases.

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Some South African adults are unaware of their risk of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), while others are already diagnosed and living with comorbidities, but they are not being treated effectively or might not be adhering to their chronic medication.

People with comorbidities tend to feel overwhelmed by having to use different types of medications daily for various NCDs, such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular (heart) disease.

The South African Medical Research Council and the Division of Chemical Pathology

at Stellenbosch University have embarked on a study assessing the relation of a healthy, plant-based diet to various clinical measurements and markers of people who are at risk of developing cardiometabolic diseases.

“Our research aims to provide clinicians and policymakers with evidence of the protective effects that consuming healthy plant foods can offer South Africans who are predisposed to NCDs,” says Tatum Lopes.

“Educating people with comorbidities on simple ways to eat better and improve their

overall health can prevent many lifestyle diseases and ultimately save on medical costs.”

A plant-based diet mainly includes plant foods with high fibre content (fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds) and contains less animal (red meat) and processed food (sugar-sweetened beverages).

“If we do not encourage people to make the necessary lifestyle changes – in particular, dietary changes, such as reducing their intake of salt, sugar and unhealthy fats – we will continue to see an increase in the number of people living with NCDs.”



*A healthy, plant-based diet can help people with comorbidities live a healthier life.*

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