

# Changing Your Plate Part III: Lunch

We talk a lot about food, in my office and home, and how changes to diet are most sustainable when they occur one meal at a time. In order to support you on your path to plant based eating, I thought it would be helpful to share some **real stories** from **real families** that we see in my practice. Becoming fully plant based is a journey. Setting realistic expectations while at the same time continually making progress is the key.

I ask my clients to change their breakfast first. What you consume for breakfast can set the stage for the rest of your day, activating your lymphatic system and encouraging healthy elimination. An alkalizing plant based breakfast will provide an alertness and clarity in the morning that can't be achieved with coffee or a meal heavy with protein. Last week I shared the Thornton family's story and their commitment to morning smoothies for the whole family, even 18 month old Lily Kai.

This week I want to introduce you to the Kearley family. Eating plant based was something Janice, who handcrafts Montessori baby toys, and her real estate inspector husband, Stephen, had implemented several years back. Since bringing their 8 year old homeschooled daughter Ruth to my practice, they've made a few tweaks. Even with the clean vegan diet they were consuming, Ruth still struggled with chronic congestion. Our plan for Ruth was more raw fruits and vegetables through lunchtime and a cooked gluten free, vegan meal for dinner. As this was not a huge leap, the transition has been fairly smooth. It also helps that Ruth not only is on board but is leading the way for the rest of the family.



Janice is very dedicated to her family's diet and has created some systems that are quite inspiring. Their first dietary changes came when Ruth was still in preschool and she and Stephen read *Disease-Proof Your Child* by Dr. Joel Fuhrman.

*"The book really got us going,"* says Janice, *"and since then we've really branched out. It was a good place to start making the switch to plant based because at the time we were still eating meat and a bit of dairy. It was a good guide to making a gradual change. It was actually quite easy by then to just eliminate meat and dairy completely. It's important to know that I LOVED cheese – but discovering recipes like Dr. Fuhrman's Orange Cashew sauce really helped. Actually, that sauce is how our daughter learned to love kale."*

With all this great experience, Janice is full of tips to share. I turned to her specifically for lunch and her's is a simple one. To keep the midday meal stress free, Janice does batch cooking of many staples. It is, however, important to note that the precooked items mentioned can just as easily be

bought prepared if and when time is a factor. Because the Kearley family keeps to a tight food budget, Janice prepares all of her beans (chickpeas, pintos, kidneys, lentils, black beans) in batches and stores them in the deep freeze in 2 cup glass storage containers. She has developed quite a seamless method to keep up on this that I will be sharing in next week's post.

Janice explains, *"Lunch is simple at our house. Everything is from what I have previously prepared. If we are at home, I'll set out raw veggies and fruits such as bell pepper, cucumber, celery, carrots, oranges, and kale chips not prepared in any way just cleaned and cut, looking for color, even if it's just the peel of the apple. I usually include some hummus, nut butter, or a black bean spread."* With these items they are able to make a wide variety of combinations.



Packed lunches use similar ingredients but the items are put into a wrap of some kind or into a sandwich with seed bread. Be sure to find the recipes for the Kearley family go-to wrap and seed bread featured in Lauren's Kitchen later this week.

Keeping lunch simple is the key here and that is the bottom line for all plant based eating. The challenge to changing behaviors is finding the bandwidth to be creative. Thinking outside of the box when under pressure and stressed is not going to be successful. So consider taking on this next step on your plant based journey when you can create for yourself some time and space to plan your own approach. And don't

forget to check back in next week for some further tips from the Kearley family on stocking your pantry!