



RDs to the Rescue: Encourage, Engage, Inspire

Leading the Charge Towards Healthy, Sustainable Diets

Our global food system is at a tipping point. More than **34 million Americans face hunger or food insecurity every day**ⁱ and many more fall short of recommended food groups and key nutrients.ⁱⁱ **Our food system and agriculture production contributes 25 to 35 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.**ⁱⁱⁱ If we don't act now, scientists believe climate change has the potential to disrupt our access to healthy diets and jeopardize our ability to feed people today and tomorrow.^{iv}

Our Food Choices Matter

As food and nutrition experts, registered dietitians are uniquely qualified to lead the charge and drive education toward the adoption of practical, healthy, sustainable diets that help keep people well, enhance access to nutritious food, and minimize environmental impacts now and for future generations. **Here's what you need to know:**

Sustainable diets are nutritious diets.

According to leading health organizations, food choices that emphasize whole, nutrient-dense food and provide plant-based diversity are good for people and planet.^{ii,vvi}



Small changes can have big health and environmental impacts.

Did you know: swapping beef or cured meats with alternatives like plant-based foods just one time per day could reduce your carbon footprint by up to 48%?^{vii,viii}



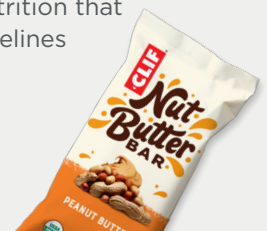
Cost is more than just a price tag.

The "true cost" of food choices includes long-term impacts on the planet and the people who produce it. Look for seals and certifications that signal production methods that help preserve the planet and foster social equity, like those shown here.^{ix}



Packaged foods can help make nutritious, sustainable eating more accessible.

While whole foods are the foundation of a healthy diet, packaged foods can provide practical and accessible nutrition that is aligned with dietary guidelines and supports our planet.



Follow these links to learn more!

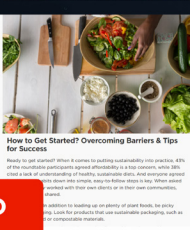
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Webinar

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Sustainable
Eating Easy

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How RDs Can Lead the
Sustainable Nutrition
Movement Webinar

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How to Eat a Healthy, Sustainable Diet

Thoughtful choices about the foods you eat can help support your health, the health of the planet, and the health of generations to follow. Small changes can have big health and environmental impacts.^{vii,viii,x} **Here are five small shifts you can make to start eating in a healthier, more sustainable way today.**



Pick more plants.

Make at least half your plate fruits and vegetables at every meal and add more plant-based proteins like beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds. **Did you know: swapping beef or processed meat with alternatives like plant-based foods just one time per day could reduce your carbon footprint by up to 48%?**^{vii,viii}



Be a food waste warrior.

The average household of 4 **wastes almost \$2,760 per year** on food that goes to landfill.^{xi} Reduce the amount of food you throw away by meal planning, preparing a grocery list, storing food properly, and repurposing leftovers.

Learn how to plan and prep with purpose.



Pay attention to packaging.

Sustainable packaging equals less waste. Buy dried goods in bulk, bring your own bags to the supermarket, and look for brands committed to **recyclable, reusable, or compostable packaging**.



Choose foods that work for you.

While the foundation of healthy, sustainable diets is whole foods, don't ignore convenient options that fit your lifestyle and budget! Packaged foods can **meet your nutrition needs and support a healthy planet** if you know what to look for.



Shop with purpose.

Affordability is more than just a price tag. The “true cost” of food choices includes long-term impacts on the planet and the people who produce it. Look for seals and certifications, like those shown here, that signal the food was made in a way that **helps preserve the planet and fosters social equity**.^{ix}

Learn which sustainability seals and certs to look for.



- i. USDA ERS - Food Security in the U.S. 2021. Available at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/>.
- ii. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/).
- iii. Ritchie H. 2022. How much of global greenhouse gas emissions come from food? Our World in Data. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/greenhouse-gas-emissions-food>.
- iv. IPCC. 2022: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- v. FAO and WHO. 2019. Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles.
- vi. World Resources Institute. 2019. Creating a Sustainable Food Future: A Menu of Solutions to Feed Nearly 10 Billion People by 2050.
- vii. Stylianou et al. Small targeted dietary changes can yield substantial gains for human health and the environment. *Nat Food*. 2021 Aug;2(8):616-627.

- viii. Rose D et al. Single-item substitutions can substantially reduce the carbon and water scarcity footprints of US diets. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2022 Feb 9;115(2):378-387.
- ix. UN Food Systems Summit. 2021. The true cost and true price of food. A paper from the scientific group of the U.N. Food Systems Summit.
- x. Miller KB et al. Role of food industry in promoting healthy and sustainable diets. *Nutrients*. 2021 Aug 10;13(8):2740.
- xi. Consumer Food Waste. ReFED. Available at: <https://refed.org/food-waste/consumer-food-waste>.

