

Introduction to Plant-based Nutrition

Course Description

This course is designed to provide an overarching introduction to plant-based nutrition as an integral part of the complementary and integrative medicine. Using cinematic media in a documentary film format, this course brings the students some of the most fascinating minds in complementary and integrative medicine from around the United States. Students will view various conversations with the top experts in this field, while also learning through hands-on demonstrations. This course is also a part of a larger course in nine modules (acupuncture, dietary supplements, exercise and physical activity, functional medicine, medicinal plants, meditation, movement therapy, plant-based nutrition, and touch therapy) where students will learn how the various disciplines of complementary and integrative medicine are synergistic in facilitating overall health and well-being.

Plant-based nutrition broadly discusses why the adoption of a whole-food, plant-based diet is significant for improving personal health and will provide students with an evidence-based scientific perspective for their efficacy and why they are growing in awareness and popularity among the general population. Students will learn how to incorporate this information into their personal lives to be healthy.

Course Teaching Objectives

- Introduce students to the basic philosophies, approaches to, and evidence of efficacy of plant-based nutrition.
- Challenge students to better understand the rationales for patients' use of plant-based nutrition as a therapy and also the significance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and implementing proactive preventive care, as opposed to relying on a reactive disease management system.
- Assist students to explore the clinical applications of plant-based nutrition for various health conditions.
- Encourage students to reflect on the management of their own personal well-being with particular emphasis on the nutritional framework in health cultivation.

Course Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the main components of the diet, the daily dietary recommendations, some of the more popular diet styles as well as key phytochemicals that have widely known health benefits.

- Construct a qualitative approach to understanding different diets and the best strategies to transition to a whole-food, plant-based diet.
- Describe the metabolic winter hypothesis, the leaky gut syndrome and present how does that expose us to other health challenges.
- Demonstrate how the microbiome and the gut play a role as the second brain, what is the connection between the gut and depression, dementia, anxiety, and other neurodegenerative diseases and how can one maintain a healthy gut.
- Demonstrate the connection between nutrition and chronic back pain and cancer and how does a plant-based diet impact cholesterol and other lipid levels.
- Engage in discussion about why nutritional science is somehow disconnected from the clinical practices of medicine.