

The Low-Carbon Diet

Eat green to reduce your carbon footprint...and waistline!

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Joining a local community supported agriculture (CSA) program, buying seasonal produce from a farmer's market and choosing grilled chicken instead of a filet mignon. Not only are these healthy choices that I encourage my clients to make, but according to recent research, they are also better for the environment. In fact, our modern food system contributes approximately one-third of all greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Who knew that our diets were bigger offenders to our carbon footprint than gas-guzzling cars?

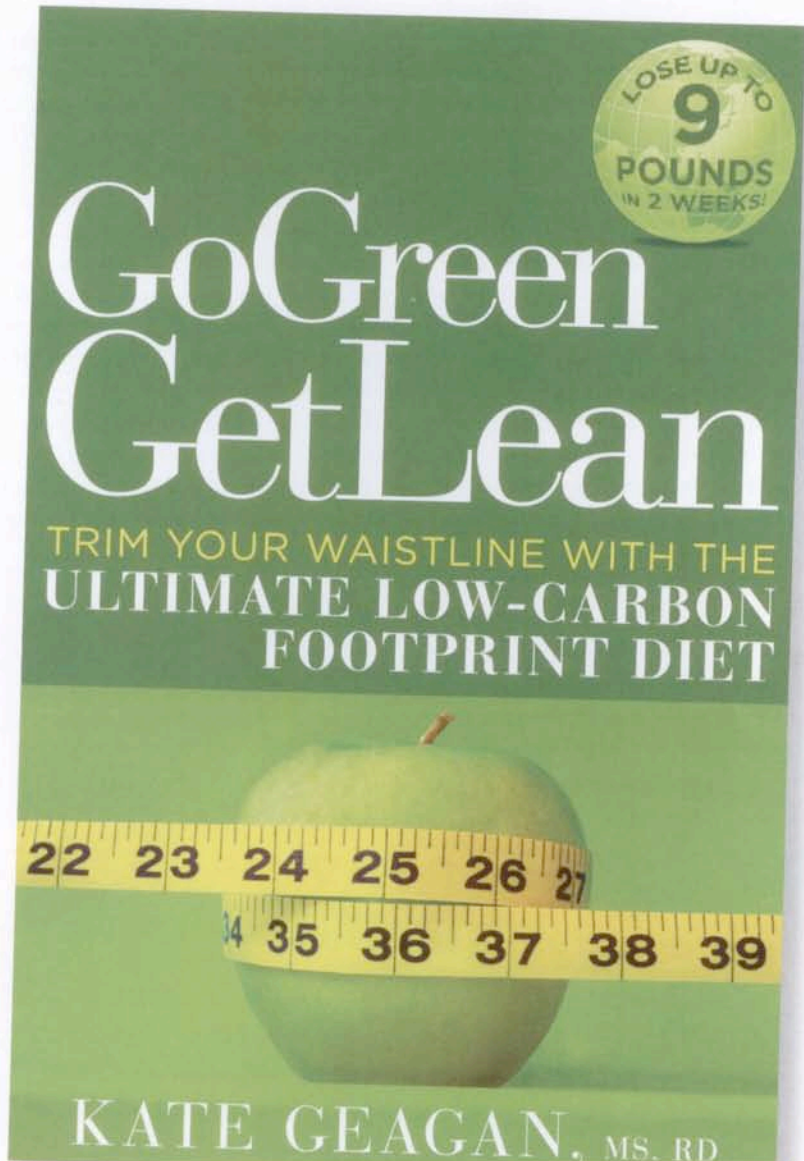
Your carbon footprint is the impact that your individual human activities have on the environment. Interestingly, we now know that food miles, the distance food travels from farm to plate, account for about 11 percent of greenhouse gases, and the specific foods we choose are the biggest culprits of greenhouse gas emissions. In other words, the climate cost of food production is worse than distance traveled for food transportation.

You might wonder which foods are bad for the environment. The beef and dairy industries are the top offenders with beef taking the unfavorable No. 1 position. This is because ruminants (cattle, goats and sheep) naturally emit methane, which is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is the greenhouse gas usually stealing the headlines, but methane and nitrous oxide also need to be included in the carbon footprint equation. Other factors leading to the high emission in the beef and dairy industries include the weight of the animals since larger animals lead to higher transport emissions, the production of animal feed, the time required to grow the animals to maturity and feeding the animals.

BENEFITS OF A LOW-CARBON DIET

By making some simple changes to your diet, not only can you help the en-

vironment by reducing your carbon footprint, but you can also reduce your waistline. The American obsession with huge portions leads us to, more often than not, simply eat too much food. This is another whammy to our planet. My friend Kate Geagan, MS, RD, has a new book



Go Green Get Lean: Trim Your Waistline with the Ultimate Low-Carbon Footprint Diet includes wonderful tips, sustainable snack ideas and a four-week meal plan of seasonal eating and recipes to help you and your family lower your carbon footprint and eat more healthfully.

Go Green Get Lean: Trim Your Waistline with the Ultimate Low-Carbon Footprint Diet, which explores how we can help save the planet while also losing weight.

According to Geagan, "Our super-sized diets are creating supersized waste—in addition to super-sized Americans. What

WELLNESS WISDOM

you eat is as important as what you drive when it comes to your contribution to global warming.”

By consuming a greener diet you will eat fewer calories because you will eat more plant-based foods; eat more nutrient-rich, disease-fighting, anti-aging foods; reduce your food budget by including more plant-based meals such as black bean soup for lunch or other vegetarian options (and, no, you don't have to become a vegetarian) and eat a diet that is safer for you and your family by choosing foods with fewer pesticides, artificial ingredients (colors, preservatives and sweeteners), hormones and antibiotics.

HOW TO EAT A LOW-CARBON DIET

The single biggest thing you can do to go green with your diet is to eat less red meat and dairy products. Research has shown that up to 50 percent of a family's "food footprint" comes from these two categories of food. So start by simply reducing your intake of red meat and dairy, which can have a significant impact from

a climate change perspective. You can aim for a 25 percent reduction, but the most important goal is to reduce consumption and shift to a diet with more plant-based foods. Just imagine if everyone did this—we could make a big difference for our environment and lose weight!

Geagan recommends eating more real food and less food products.

“Not only will you likely trim calories and boost nutrition in each bite, but you will reduce the amount of energy that was required to bring that food to your plate. All of that processing, packaging, storage and waste adds significantly to a food's overall carbon footprint,” says Geagan.

Try some new plant-based recipes for your main entrée at least a few times a week. This is a great way to reduce calorie intake, too. Experimenting with new recipes is a great way to help the dinner doldrums. Some great vegetarian protein sources include beans, lentils and quinoa (buy in the bulk food section at Whole Foods).

Joining a local CSA program is another way to try new produce while buying lo-

cal, seasonal foods. Visit www.localharvest.org to check out the different CSAs in the area.

This past year, I joined a CSA program through Hen House on 135th Street in Overland Park. Every Saturday, from May through September, I went to pick up my two bags of groceries from local farms at Hen House. I paid \$25 (plus tax) weekly for the food, and both of my daughters really enjoyed picking up the “food from the farmers” on Saturdays.

Another green diet suggestion from Geagan is to “think your drink.” She says, “Liquid calories don't register with the brain the same way food calories do (which can contribute to weight gain). Liquids are also incredibly heavy to transport, which means they burn many more fossil fuels just to get that chilled beverage to an aisle near you.” ♦

To calculate your own carbon footprint visit www.eatlowcarbon.org.

It's a Beautiful Day!
A spring makeover extravaganza benefitting Phoenix Family Housing

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Saturday, March 7th, 2009
9:00 am to 5:00 pm

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Spring is coming and it's time to shake off the winter blahs!

On Saturday, March 7th, join the Personal Best Pilates Staff and friends for a **head-to-toe, inside-out makeover event**. We've gathered a group of experts who will present the **latest trends in exercise, nutrition, skin care, hair, make up and fashion**, so you'll be looking and feeling beautiful this spring. Most importantly, a portion of all the proceeds of this event will go to Phoenix Family Housing, a not for profit serving at-risk youth, families and seniors in our community - **because generous hearts are beautiful!!!**

Programs Will Include:

- ⊕ Cute spring active wear and accessories
- ⊕ Skin analysis and the latest technology for fighting wrinkles
- ⊕ Fitness testing and postural assessment
- ⊕ Pilates
- ⊕ Massage
- ⊕ Detoxifying body wraps to lose inches
- ⊕ Fresh hair and make up ideas for spring
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