

5 TIPS-**EATING** for **BETTER HEALTH** and a **HEALTHIER PLANET**

From Westreich Foundation and Our Affinity Partners

CURRENT CHALLENGES to the health of our planet and our health as humans, loom very large across the globe. They can seem too big to solve. History shows us that individual actions can add up to big social change – so don't be dismayed. **The Westreich Foundation** will introduce you to the people and organizations that are driving positive change. They highlight the changes that each of us can make on a daily basis to actually make a difference. Here we share 5 simple tips as a starting point. We explain why and how these changes promote positive change.

At the Westreich Foundation we know that our personal health and that of our families is directly linked to the health of our planet. Both Mother Earth and our bodies have an ecosystem. When the earth's internal eco-system – water, soil and air – are disrupted, our health is also disrupted. Chronic environmental issues, industrialized farming and a food system that relies heavily on processed foods leads to where we are today with 85% of humans having one or more chronic health conditions.

Before we get to why, let's begin with some hard-to-face facts. Half of all arable land in the United States is used for farming, but only 0.6 % is farmed sustainably. Intensive non-sustainable farming places a huge burden on the soil. Farms lose up to 6 tons of top soil per acre, per year as a result.

Do you know that the industrialization of the

United States agricultural system accounts for 30% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of our water use used to grow food and that US food production uses up to 13% of our energy resources?

The reliance on antibiotics, herbicides and pesticides on farms have become more common over the decades. While these so-called advancements were sold as a saving grace for farmers, the reality of the situation has turned into a nightmare that many farmers regret. Farmers like Allen Williams, PhD, from Soil Health Consultants and Farmer's Footprint says he and others became addicted to these chemicals.

Instead of creating a better farming system, these chemicals decimate everything good in the soil. One of the most common chemicals, glyphosates, which is used to kill unwanted weeds, strips the soil of its vitality and life and pollutes our water systems. The constant degradation from glyphosates impedes soil biodiversity by not only killing weeds, but also killing important fungi and bacteria that help build up the soil's microbiome.

It's no different than your own health. Without a healthy microbiome (gut health), our immune systems are in jeopardy. The same goes for soil. This cascading affect means our soil is sick. As a result, our soil, ground water and





waterways are tainted with chemicals, food is less nutritious, and we are at greater risk for cancers and other chronic illnesses. As we say at the Westreich Foundation, your health and the health of the planet are inextricably linked.

As we said, this is a big problem. What can you do? We offer these five tips to get started on your quest for a healthier body and a healthier planet:

1. EAT an anti-inflammatory diet

A diet that is high in calories, high in sugars, saturated fats, highly processed ingredients and heavy on the meats is unhealthy and unsustainable for the environment. Diets like these not only contribute to chronic inflammation, heart disease, diabetes and obesity, they also support the farming methods that lead to more air and water pollution, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity and large-scale land clearing.

2. EAT MORE PLANTS and fewer animal products

Eating more vegetables and fruits is better for your health and the planet. At the very least, try becoming a part-time vegetarian (called a flexitarian). Even taking meat out of your diet for seven meals a week has benefits for your health and Mother Nature. If you do eat meat and other animal proteins, eat less. Choose sustainably raised proteins to avoid hormones and antibiotics used in traditional livestock and poultry farming. Learn to prepare stews, soups and one-pan meals that are three-quarter vegetables and one-quarter animal proteins.

3. SHOP FOR FOOD LOCALLY, buy biodynamic and organically grown foods and consider delivery.

• **SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS** who use smaller footprint farming methods reduces emissions and wear-and-tear on the land as compared to large-scale and confined farming methods. Learn more about the changes farmers are making to improve soil quality and regenerate farm land from Farmer's Footprint.

• **LEARN TO READ LABELS.** When you purchase certified organic foods, you reduce your risk of exposure to toxins from antibiotics, pesticides and herbicides like glyphosates. Learn more here from Moms Across America.

• If it is possible in your area, **DELIVERY OF GROCERIES** can reduce emissions by up to 50% because of efficiencies in distribution.

4. STOP WASTING FOOD. It's so easy to buy too much food. Time, energy and changes in plans can railroad the best intentions to use up all the perishables in the refrigerator. In this country, as much as 40% of all our food is thrown out because of spoilage. The best way to reduce this waste is to plan out your meals, account for leftovers and be honest with yourself about how often you eat out.

5. SHUN SINGLE-USE PLASTICS. The United States generates 14.5 million tons of plastics per year. Of that only 1.9 million tons are recycled. The remaining plastics end up in landfills and as litter on land, in oceans and waterways. What can you do to stop this?

• **DON'T BUY BOTTLE WATER** and other plastic bottled drinks – use your own reusable beverage containers.

• **TAKE ACTION** by contacting beverage companies and take-away restaurants to ask them to take more responsibility for finding recycling and repurposing solutions for the plastic they create or use to package their products. Our cities and municipalities carry the burden for recycling. It's time these companies seek out alternative plant materials, such as hemp, to create food and beverage packaging that can be repurposed or composted.

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LEARN MORE about regenerative and organic agriculture and how to eat for a healthier you and a healthier Mother Earth from our affinity partners.



FARMER'S FOOTPRINT

Zach Bush, Farmer's Footprint
farmersfootprint.us



Eric Cutter, Alegria Fresh
alegriafresh.com



Mom's Across America
momsacrossamerica.com



Rachel's Network

Rachel's Network
rachelsnetwork.org



Health Research Institute Laboratories

Health Research Institute
hrilabs.org



Organic Consumers Association

Organic Consumers Association
organicconsumers.org



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