

**Neal Barnard, M.D.**

Neal Barnard is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine in Washington, DC, and President of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

Dr. Barnard has led numerous research studies investigating the effects of diet on diabetes, body weight, and chronic pain, including a groundbreaking study of dietary interventions in type 2 diabetes, funded by the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Barnard has authored more than 70 scientific publications as well as 17 books.

As president of the Physicians Committee, Dr. Barnard leads programs advocating for preventive medicine, good nutrition, and higher ethical standards in research. He has hosted three PBS television programs on nutrition and health and is frequently called on by news programs to discuss issues related to nutrition and research.

Originally from Fargo, North Dakota, Dr. Barnard received his M.D. degree at the George Washington University School of Medicine and completed his residency at the same institution. He practiced at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York before returning to Washington to found the Physicians Committee.

Vegetarian diets in diabetes

Type 2 diabetes has become a major epidemic, often leading to serious complications and major costs. Although medications remain a mainstay of treatment, nutritional interventions have shown surprising power in both the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes.

Particular attention has been paid to plant-based diets. As a group, individuals following such diets have a lower diabetes prevalence, compared to others. They also tend to have lower plasma cholesterol levels and are less likely to be overweight.

In clinical trials, plant-based diets have led to dramatic improvements in blood glucose control, plasma lipids, blood pressure, and body weight. The beneficial effect of the diet on glycemic control appears to be mediated by (1) weight loss and (2) a reduction in intramyocellular lipid—the intracellular fat that leads to insulin resistance. This presentation will describe the rationale for these trials, their results, and how clinicians can put their findings to use.

Learning objectives:

1. Participants will understand the rationale for the use of plant-based diets in diabetes management.
2. Participants will understand the effect of diet interventions on blood glucose, lipids, and body weight.
3. Participants will learn how to initiate and monitor therapeutic diets for patients with type 2 diabetes.