HOW FOOD INGREDIENTS FIT INTO A PLANT-BASED DIET

WHAT IS “PLANT-BASED”?

According to the American Heart Association, “plant-forward is a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes plant-based foods but is not strictly limited to them.” By 2030, plant-based food sales, including meat and dairy alternatives, are expected to see a five-fold increase worldwide.

BENEFITS OF INGREDIENTS IN PLANT-BASED FOODS

Without food ingredients, many plant-based foods and alternatives would not be appropriate for human consumption.

Check out the ways food ingredients help enhance your favorite plant-based foods.

1. TASTE AND TEXTURE
   a. Carrageenan and locust bean gum are plant-based ingredients that replace animal-derived gelatins to enhance the texture and stability of dairy products and nut milks. Methylcellulose helps bind together the ingredients of plant-based burger alternatives.
   b. Sweeteners, flavor enhancers and some enzymes help enhance taste in products with reduced sugar and salt.

2. LONGER SHELF LIFE
   a. Mono and diglycerides of fatty acids are used as emulsifiers and help extend the shelf life of frozen foods, chocolate and infant formula. They are also used to form edible coatings that are applied directly to the surface of fresh fruits and vegetables to prevent spoilage and cut down on food waste.
   b. Microbial food cultures improve the preservation of foods by naturally producing organic acids that help prevent spoilage. They also help with extending freshness and reducing food waste along the supply chain.

3. NUTRITIONAL VALUE
   a. The thickening agent guar gum is derived from guar beans and is used to keep fats and oils from separating in foods like soups, stews and yogurts. Studies have shown that guar gum, when consumed in moderation, can act as a prebiotic, blood sugar regulator and weight loss aid.
   b. Yeast extract contains naturally occurring vitamin B12 and helps improve the nutritional quality of processed foods.

SOURCES:
1. How does Plant-Forward (Plant-Based) Eating Benefit your Health? American Heart Association
2. Plant-based food sales are expected to increase fivefold by 2030 Fortune
3. Even Food Ingredients Can Play a Part in a Plant-Based Diet International Food Additives Council
4. Partially hydrolyzed guar gum as a potential prebiotic source National Institute of Health