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Want to Relieve Your Menstrual Cramps? Going Vegan Might Help: Study

by [CHELSEA BRIMSTIN](#)

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UNSPASH

Are you looking for a new way to ease your menstrual cramps? Well, according to a new study, going vegan may help ease period pain.

[Everyday Health](#) reports that a study was presented at the annual meeting of the [North American Menopause Society \(NAMS\)](#), which showed that changes in your diet can impact your period pain.

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“Severe menstrual pain is the leading cause of school absenteeism in adolescents and college-age women,” researcher Serah Sannoh said. “Making changes in their diet can significantly improve their quality life.”

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Sannoh and her team of researchers evaluated approximately 20 studies to analyze the relationship between diet and menstrual pain. Ultimately, they looked to identify foods that contribute to inflammation during your menstrual cycle.



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What foods exacerbate menstrual pain?

According to the study, diets that were high in omega-6 fatty acids cause more inflammation during your menstrual cycle, ultimately exacerbating cramps and period pain. This is a big problem for teens, as these fats are prominent in their diet.

“The American diet eaten by girls this age tends to be very high in these fats, which are generally found in processed oils and meats,” Sannoh explained. “The fast food places and college food halls where these girls eat serve a lot of these foods.”

Diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids, on the other hand – which are found in plant-based foods like legumes, beans and nuts – reduced inflammation, easing painful menstrual symptoms.

“Since menstrual pain results from inflammation, it is important to have a balance of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids in your diet or have more omega-3 fatty acids in your diet,” she explained.

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Ultimately, inflammatory foods such as red meat, processed meat and foods with added sugar amplified period pain. These foods increase the amount of prostaglandins circulating in the body, which can cause more constricting blood vessels in the uterus, resulting in more severe cramps.

Since red meats and dairy are inflammatory, they can contribute to menstrual-related inflammation. Additionally, salt, oil, coffee and processed foods with added sugar can all contribute to painful cramps.

How can a vegan diet reduce menstrual pain?

While it may be upsetting to hear that meat, chocolate and junk food won't actually help at all when you have your period, it's not all bad news.

“I am hopeful that this research can help those who menstruate reduce the pain they experience and shed light on the importance of holistic treatment options,” Sannoh explains.

In her research, Sannoh cites [a study published in *Nutrition Research*](#), where several participants were selected to follow different diets, ranging from vegan to carnivorous. Though the study didn't look directly at menstrual cramps, participants who followed vegan, vegetarian or pesco-vegetarian diets all experienced reduced bodily inflammation.

“Learning about different foods that increase and decrease inflammation, which subsequently increase or reduce menstrual pain, revealed that diet is one of the many contributors to health outcomes that are often overlooked,” [Sannoh concludes](#).

So, if you're struggling with menstrual pains, it may be worth reducing your meat intake, or moving toward a plant-based diet.

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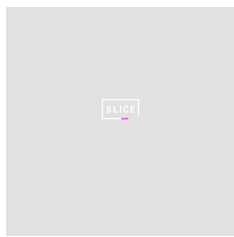


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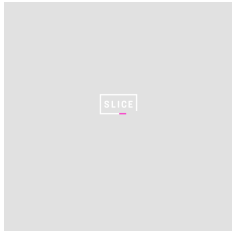
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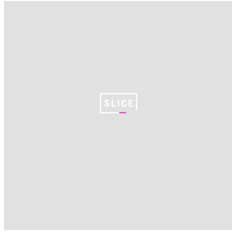


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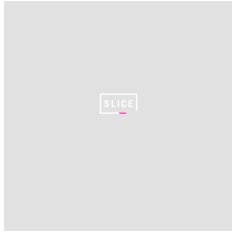


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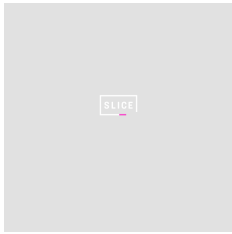


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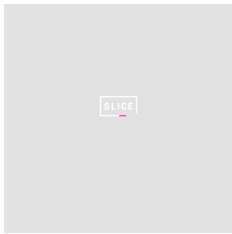


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