

NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS

Plant-Based Meal Program

Timeline

- 2019** After taking the **Meatless Mondays** pledge, NYC Health + Hospitals began offering plant-based meals each Monday at its **11 hospitals**. The plant-based meals proved extremely popular, with **97%** of patients sticking with the plant-based option.
- 2022** In March, NYC Health + Hospitals began offering plant-based meals as the **“Chef’s Recommendation”** for lunch daily. Later that year, plant-based defaults expanded to dinner service.
- 2026** In March, NYC Health + Hospitals celebrated its **four-year anniversary** of the program, having served nearly **three million plant-based meals**, with 700,000 in 2025 alone.

Overview

Client & Staff Buy-In

- Hospital staff sample new recipes, which only enter the menu rotation if they achieve an **80% patient satisfaction** rate or above.
- The first choice** offered to patients for lunch and dinner daily is the plant-based Chef’s Recommendation.

Culturally-Relevant Recipes

- NYC Health + Hospitals **serves more than 25** unique, tasty, and nutritious plant-based dishes.
- Recipes draw from NYC’s diverse community, using ingredients, flavors, and names that are **familiar and comforting** to patients of all ethnic backgrounds.

Restaurant-Like Service

- Serving **15,000 meals daily**, NYC Health + Hospitals’ Food Service Associates provide restaurant-like service with each meal.
- Patients discharged from the hospital receive a booklet of **plant-based recipes** to make at home.

Impacts



Over 2.8 million
plant-based meals served since March 2022



98%
patient satisfaction



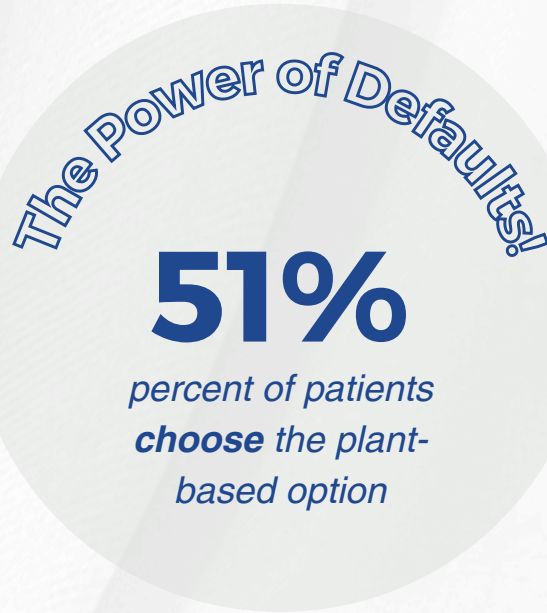
36%
reduction in food-related carbon emissions



\$59¢
saved per tray (\$500,000 in the first year of implementation)



Kabocha Squash Curry with Lima Bean Rice



Food Service Associates

Providing restaurant-like service to every patient

Engaging with patients by taking food orders, delivering meals, & gathering feedback

Serving as ambassadors to the plant-based program

Educating patients about the flavor and nutrition of the day’s plant-based options

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What's on the Menu?



Moroccan Vegetable
Tagine with Rice Pilaf



Pea Pesto Pasta
with Roasted Tomatoes



Garden Bolognese



Jackfruit Jambalaya

+ more delicious plant-based recipes!

Testimonials

"NYC Health + Hospitals is leading a growing movement of institutions implementing plant-based defaults to encourage people to try delicious foods that help prevent chronic disease, while still protecting freedom of choice."

Katie Cantrell, CEO at Greener By Default

"Nutritious, tasty food is another way we care for our patients. Our plant-based menu reflects our patients' cultural diversity so they can experience familiar dishes to make their hospital stay more comfortable."

Dr. Mitchell Katz, President and CEO at NYC Health + Hospitals

"This has been one of the most rewarding challenges in my career. To be the creative partner behind this food project and serve those in the largest municipal healthcare system in the States is a large task. Knowing our patients' acceptance of what we have achieved is the catalyst to continue this journey."

Philip DeMaiolo, Sodexo Corporate Chef at NYC Health + Hospitals



Culinary Center Staff

Health Benefits of Scratch-Cooked Plant-Based Eating

Lowers risk of...

- Cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Certain cancers
- Obesity

Helps with...

- Weight management
- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia

In the Media

"How New York's Public Hospitals Cut Carbon Emissions: More Vegetables"

[New York Times](#)

"How Hospital Food Can Fuel Sustainability Efforts"

[American Hospital Association](#)

"An Innovative Program for Hospital Nutrition"

[American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine](#)

"NYC Health and Hospitals Mark 2 Years of Serving Patients Plant-Based Foods"

[News 12 Brooklyn](#)

"Introducing Patients to Plant-Based Meals"

[Perspectives Podcast](#)

"C40: Mayors Making Good Food Cities"

[Food Planet Prize](#)