



## **Meatless Monday Celebrates 20th Anniversary, As New Data Shows Gen Z Going Meatless at Least Once A Week, Embracing Alternatives to Meat**

*Built on a Simple Weekly Habit and Grounded In Academic Rigor, Partnerships and Open Source Model, Iconic Public Health Campaign Marks 20 Year Milestone and Global Impact*

**October 2, 2023** - Meatless Monday is celebrating its 20th birthday, marking two decades of culture-shifting impact encouraging people to reduce meat in their diet for their health and the health of the planet. Built on the simple idea that skipping meat just one day a week could drive big change, Meatless Monday has grown into a global movement supported by individuals, parents, chefs, restaurants, schools, hospitals and even entire cities.

The campaign was co-founded in 2003 by advertising executive Sid Lerner and Dr. Bob Lawrence, the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. The uniqueness of combining a simple advertising and marketing approach with science-backed resources made the idea easy to do and memorable - and the foundation for future success.

“Twenty years ago, Meatless Monday launched at a time when no one talked about meat reduction as a public health and a climate solution,” said Dana Smith, Meatless Monday Campaign Director. “Meatless Monday was a pioneer with its simple idea - skip meat once a week - to improve your health and the health of the planet. Two decades later the campaign has sparked a global movement and has an online community of hundreds of thousands.”

As the campaign celebrates 20 years, studies show younger generations embracing alternatives to meat more than ever: Noting the spread of Meatless Monday in schools, [a recent study showed 87%](#) of Gen Z are open to purchasing alternatives to meat. [79% of Gen Z’ers are](#) now going meatless at least once a week - the action championed by the Meatless Monday campaign. [A survey commissioned by Meatless Monday](#) showed that of Gen Z’ers who became aware of Meatless Monday, over half were influenced by the campaign to cut back on meat consumption - the highest of any age cohort.

“As a plant-based chef working to inspire others to enjoy meatless meals, I’m so grateful to Meatless Monday for their 20 years of recipes, tools, and creativity,” said [vegan sustainable chef](#) and *Food Network* Champion, [Priyanka Naik](#). “Younger generations want to make a difference, and increasingly are going plant-based for their health and the planet. The simple concept of Meatless Monday gives them an easy, fresh way to do it.”

Meatless Monday has been effective in part because it provides a regular cue to take action every Monday, which [research](#) shows is the day people are most open to making positive changes. Starting each week practicing Meatless Monday can lead people to eat more fruits, vegetables and plant-based meals throughout the rest of the week. [A 2021 nationally representative survey](#) found that 38% of all Americans were aware of Meatless Monday, with nearly half saying it shifted their eating habits. The campaign has also pioneered an “open source” model, with [free resources, tool kits, and eating guides](#) that allows institutions to launch their own campaign and adapt it to their audiences.

Over its 20 Years, Meatless Monday has been featured in media from the Today Show, Good Morning America, the New York Times and CNN to Buzzfeed, with celebrity endorsements and support from Oprah, Beyonce, Sir Paul McCartney and Michael Pollan. Whole cities - from Aspen and Los Angeles - have instituted Meatless Monday, while major school districts including New York City Public Schools and San Diego Public Schools have instituted the program, which now has half a million followers across multiple social and digital media platforms.

"The Meatless Monday movement has made a powerful impact and continues to make significant contributions, but it can also serve as an inspiration to raise our ambitions and set new goals," says Bloomberg School Dean Ellen J. MacKenzie, PhD, ScM. "As members of the public health community, we must find new ways to incorporate meat reduction into our work, as we continue to build evidence and develop interventions to address the numerous, interrelated public health threats fueled by high meat diets."

Since its inception, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future has provided science and technical advisory to the campaign, quantifying impacts and initiating peer-reviewed research. [The campaign's foundational research](#) shows that reducing the consumption of red and processed meat and eating more plant-based foods - even just one day a week - has many powerful benefits for health and the climate, from improving heart health, reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes and maintaining a healthy weight to significantly lowering the production of greenhouse gasses, and the demand for resources.

"We set out with a simple idea to help people reduce their risk of heart disease and live healthier lives by improving their diet at least one day a week," said Bob Lawrence, founder of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and one of the visionaries behind the campaign. "To see a new generation embracing this campaign, going meatless once a week and changing the culture is a powerful testament to the original vision for Meatless Monday, and an incredible foundation for the next 20 years."

Throughout October, [Meatless Monday will be sharing](#) their favorite recipes, videos, shopping guides, and cooking hacks, as well as social media graphics, research papers, and other resources to commemorate the 20 year celebration.

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*Meatless Monday is a global movement that encourages people to reduce meat in their diet for their health and the health of the planet. To sign up and be part of Meatless Monday, go to <https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/meatless-monday>.*