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Diet Corner

Plant-based meat alternatives (PBMAs) are part of a flexitarian approach to replace at least some of the animal meat consumption. Not all meat substitutes are sustainable. Some contain palm oil; may include genetically modified foods; some may be classed as ultra-processed (UPFs) because of their reduced amounts of ingredients of high nutritional value along with high levels of unhealthy fats, refined carbohydrates, high sodium content, preservatives, and sweeteners. PBMAs are generally lower in kilojoules, total and saturated fat, higher in carbohydrate, sugars, and dietary fibre compared with meat. A study found that only 4% of products were low in sodium, less than a quarter (24%) were fortified with vitamin B12, 20% with iron, and 18% with zinc. PBMAs may put vulnerable population at greater risk for nutrient deficiencies and accompanying health issues. Novel PBMAs should arguably be treated as meat alternatives in terms of sensory experience, but not as true meat replacements in terms of nutrition.

According to a study, PBMA products elicited changes in gut microbiota that are consistent with eubiosis. Occasional replacement of animal meats with PBMA may promote positive changes to the gut microbiome.

References:

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