

## Meatless Monday in Municipalities

Meatless Monday is a movement designed to help reduce meat consumption for personal health and the health of the planet. Begun in 2003 in association with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Center for a Livable Future, Meatless Monday encourages individuals to **go without meat one day a week**. Research shows that eating less meat and more vegetables and plant-based proteins is associated with fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and some cancers) and lower body weights. Eating less meat also reduces the demand for limited resources such as water, land and other agricultural inputs and produces fewer harmful greenhouse gases. It may also be more affordable; many whole-food plant-based foods (e.g., beans, lentils, whole grains) cost less than meat, eggs and dairy products.

*“If we do it one plate at time, one meal, one day, we are ratcheting down the impact on our environment. We start with one day a week and then, who knows, maybe we can change our habits for a lifetime.”*  
- Ed Reyes, Los Angeles City Councilman

Meatless Monday (MM) encourages individual change, but communities can play a role spreading the word and building momentum. In fact, municipalities all over the country have adopted or leveraged MM as a way to improve the health and environmental footprint of their community. MM offers a simple, practical step toward healthier behaviors and when done in a larger group, it can be fun, foster creativity and engage new participants. And the more people participating, the greater the impact!

Communities large and small have used Meatless Monday as a way to educate citizens about the benefits of reducing the amount of meat they consume and motivate them to improve their health and the health of the planet. The key to engaging at the municipality level is committed advocates from all across the community – politicians, chefs, health care professionals, students, parents and more.

### Top 12 ways to engage your municipality

1. **Make a Proclamation:** City or county Proclamations are commonly used to endorse Meatless Monday. While they are not legally binding, they encourage citizens to adopt Meatless Monday. By publicly endorsing the campaign, council members and politicians support and give credibility to community groups, businesses, hospitals and schools that take up the cause.
2. **Promote a Restaurant List:** Restaurants play an important role demonstrating that meals without meat can be delicious and satisfying. Develop a list of restaurants that have Meatless Monday or vegetarian menu items available on Monday. You can go further by highlighting restaurants that offer discounts or specials for Meatless Monday.
3. **Set up social networks.** Create or host a webpage or Facebook page that provides an opportunity for citizens to share events, recipes, blogs, and resources.
4. **Highlight Events** that align with Meatless Monday’s message. For example, promote vegetarian festivals and events that feature plant-based diets. These events give

citizens an opportunity to taste new foods and help bring plant-based eating into the main stream.

5. **Meatless Monday Initiatives.** Include Meatless Monday in community-wide health campaigns or initiatives. Support Meatless Monday campaigns with press kits, billboards, radio spots, online recipes, community outreach materials and events to educate residents about healthy habits.
6. **Meatless Monday Pledge.** Host a Pledge drive where citizens can make a pledge to go meatless on Mondays. Post it on your website or Facebook.
7. **Meatless Monday Education:** Offer speakers, education and promotional materials through your health department, office of sustainability, or other organization.
8. **Media Coverage:** Run regular stories in the media about Meatless Monday. Include stories about individuals as well as businesses (restaurants, grocery stores) that have embraced Meatless Monday successfully.
9. **Meatless Monday at school and in the work place.** Encourage schools, hospitals and corporate sites to adopt Meatless Monday in their food service. MM is especially popular and simple to implement in elementary schools, but when offered as a creative, tasty choice, it enhances the offerings in any cafeteria. Many school systems are participating to curb obesity and encourage healthy eating habits among students and families.
10. **Promote Meatless Monday in your food (policy) council,** food bank and other organizations that work toward access to healthy food. At your food bank, offer recipes and ideas for making meatless meals and highlight the ingredients needed for the meals. Meatless is nutritious, cheap, easy to prepare!
11. **Support policies that** increase access to fresh vegetables and healthy foods, such as EBT machines at farmers markets, fruit and vegetable incentive coupon programs, and food banks that offer fresh produce.
12. **Set an example.** Offer Meatless Monday meal options in government buildings and offices.

### Meatless Monday Resources

- [Meatless Monday Toolkit](#)
- [Sample Meatless Monday Proclamation](#)

### Stories:

- The [Vermont food bank](#) puts out recipes and instructions for their Meatless Monday Feature and includes vegetarian meals and meals that are affordable.
- At the [Cleveland Food Bank](#), every Monday, each of the ~6,000 meals the Greater Cleveland Food Bank Kitchen offers is meatless.
- In Baltimore, the [Franciscan Center](#) was the first “soup kitchen” in the country to participate in the national Meatless Monday initiative. Every Monday, the Center serves a delicious vegetarian meal.
- Indianapolis Meatless Monday has a [Facebook page](#) with recipes and education.

- Aspen, Colorado was the first community in the nation to adopt Meatless Monday. Nutritionists, and residents have embraced Meatless Monday through events and a [Facebook page](#).
- [Eighth grade students in New Haven, CT](#) pushed their school to offer Meatless Monday and are working to spread it across the state.

**Cities with Meatless Monday Proclamations:** Boone, NC; Bowie, MD; Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Durham County, NC; Indianapolis, IN; Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Montgomery County, MD; Oakland, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Sacramento, CA; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA; South Miami City, FL; Washington, DC; Vancouver, Canada