



Using 4Leaf Survey Results to Improve

The diet and health of your family

Now that you have your 4Leaf point score, how do you benefit from it? You can easily see where you're getting most of your non-whole-plant calories and can start making healthier choices in those categories. Think of each calorie as a fleeting opportunity to do something great for your body. As we noted in our book, the health of 100 million future cells is riding on every bite that you put in your mouth. Start trying to make every bite count.

(Revised on 5-26-15 by J. Morris Hicks, CEO, 4Leaf Global, LLC)

Questions 1 – 4 are about whole, plant-based foods. These are the only questions on the survey where you can score “plus” points. Start with your “routine” meals, the ones that you eat several times a week---take steps to make sure that these meals derive well over 80% their calories from whole plants.

Your fruits and vegetables are best if fresh, your legumes are best if purchased dry and your grains should have only one ingredient listed on the package. If you're trying to lose weight, go easy on the high-fat foods like nuts, avocado, olives & seeds. Finally, begin working with your favorite restaurants to create some healthy “3” or 4Leaf options that you can order on a regular basis; minimizing oil and white flour.

Look for opportunities to improve where you had the most “negative” points.

Questions 5-7 are all about dairy and eggs. Most vegetarians still eat cheese, eggs, yogurt, & ice cream and regularly use milk or cream in their coffee or cereal. None of these are health foods and have no place in a health-promoting 4Leaf lifestyle. It's time to start some new habits without these unhealthy, animal-based foods.

1. **Start by eliminating cow's milk;** it is not fit for human consumption. Replace it in your coffee or cereal with soy, almond, or rice milk. I even use water & grapefruit juice in my oatmeal from time to time.
2. **Learn to live without cheese.** It has become our single biggest source of saturated fat and is just as unhealthy as milk or red meat. Instead, learn to love healthy foods like hummus, quinoa, lentils, etc.

Questions 8-10 are about the “unhealthy” plant-based calories---added sugar, white flour, and the ubiquitous salty snacks and “sweets. Take a look at where you lost points and consider these tips:

1. **Become a sugar-Nazi,** get it out of your house and check every label for added sugar. Learn to get your sweet taste from sweet, natural, plant foods. (Honey is not a whole plant)
2. **Say goodbye to the “white” stuff.** That means white flour, rice and sugar. Say hello to whole grains and products made from them. If you buy packaged bread, insist on whole grain and avoid breads with more than three ingredients. Good luck with that one.
3. **Become a healthy-snacker.** We all need a snack between meals from time to time; so keep some healthy snacks like nuts, fruit, carrots, celery, broccoli, and homemade hummus.

Questions 11 & 12 are very important. One is about the widely perceived “need” for animal protein and the final question deals with vegetable oil, which the entire world seems to think is good for you.

1. **Don't “plan” to have animal flesh.** For, if you do, that means you will be putting it in your shopping cart, ordering it in restaurants and having it when served in friends' homes.
2. **All oil is unhealthy, including olive.** All oil is 100% fat, has no fiber and is associated with heart disease. At least get it out of your cupboard; you can cook and sautee' in almost any liquid.

Free Advice. If you are serious about healthy eating, we don't recommend baby steps. Rather, move directly to the 4Leaf level as soon as possible. For changing a habit, it's actually much easier to go all the way. Otherwise, you will still be missing your old foods while not getting the full benefit of the new, healthier foods. Not a good formula for success.

Disagree with your 4Leaf Score? Try the *Shopping Cart Check*. You can definitely tell how healthy a family is eating by looking at their shopping cart. So, before putting those groceries away, take an hour or so, go to nutritiondata.com and add up all of the “calories” of whole plants that you have purchased and divide that by the grand total of calories that you brought home. If your score is less than 80%, then there is no way you're going to ever hit 4Leaf on a regular basis. Your best chance of eating healthy is in the home---so you should shoot for over 90% of “whole plant calories” from your shopping cart---giving yourself a little wiggle room for all those meals and snacks outside the home.

Bottom Line. Embrace and nurture your healthy eating adventure. Find great recipes and prepare some of the most delicious meals that you will ever eat. Avoid the temptation to load up on the fake meats, cheeses and eggs; but rather work on learning to LOVE this new way of eating. If you don't learn to love it, you are not likely to stick with it.