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A vegan diet can boost erections, according to a new Netflix documentary. Here's the reality.

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- A new medical study is underway to test whether a [vegan](#) diet can lead to stronger, longer lasting erections.
- [Vegan](#) advocates and some urologists have suggested in the past that [a plant-based diet](#) improves blood flow, boosting men's sexual function.
- **The current research on whether it actually works in otherwise healthy men is mixed, although a [plant-based diet](#) can be beneficial in other ways.**
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Plant-based diets have many health benefits, from better heart health to lower risk of certain cancers. But eschewing meat and other animal products may not really improve your sex life, according to available evidence.

Meat-eating is often [associated with masculinity](#) in popular culture. We call muscular men "beefy," and words like "sausage" often euphemize male genitalia.

However, a growing number of advocates and experts hypothesize that it's actually a plant-based diet that best supports erection size and staying power.

The new vegan-friendly [Netflix](#) documentary, "[The Game Changers](#)" (produced by Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jackie Chan, and James Cameron) dedicates a scene to exactly that topic, claiming that after a single plant-based meal, 3 young men found their erections lasted three times as long and were nearly 10% stronger.

Advocates claim veganism can increase erection size, strength and duration by boosting blood flow

The film features [Dr. Aaron Spitz](#), urologist and author of "The Penis Book," a comprehensive medical guide to the human member.

In the movie, Spitz conducts a brief test on three male college athletes, measuring the girth, strength and duration of their erections over two nights as they sleep. The first night of the test, each of the men are given a meat-based burrito, and the resulting effects on their overnight erections is measured. The second night, the men are given plant-based burritos.

After eating the plant-based meal, all of the men showed an 8% increase in erection hardness, and a 300 to 500% increase in the amount of time their erections lasted, compared to the meat-based meal.

"This is not a scientifically validated study, but the results that we're seeing are very exciting," Spitz said in the film.

It turns out that those claims are supported by a rather flaccid body of evidence. Although anecdotal evidence is promising, there aren't yet any rigorous scientific studies to show a meat-free diet makes a difference on erections.

While a plant-based diet can lead to better blood flow, there's no direct evidence that it leads to better erections

Vegan and vegetarian diets are typically low in saturated fat and cholesterol, which are plentiful in beef, pork, and dairy products. Healthy blood flow is also directly related to healthy erections — [high blood pressure](#), cholesterol, and other vascular problems linked to meat-eating have also been linked to erectile dysfunction.

It's true that better cardiac health can improve overall blood flow, which may lead to better erections, said Dr. Seth Cohen, urologist at NYU Langone Health.

"The harder your heart has to work to pump blood to your organs and everywhere else, the less actually makes it to the penis." Cohen told Insider.

But it's too early to say how, or if, plant-based diets affect sexual health, since the research just hasn't been done, he said.

"There really isn't any good data to say that a [vegan diet](#) will improve your erections," Cohen added

A new study to test how veganism directly affects men's sexual health has been scheduled for late 2019 or early 2020, led by [Dr. Robert Ostfeld](#) of Montefiore Medical Center. The research is funded by the Purjes Foundation, a nonprofit created by financier Dan Purjes to promote the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

"To the best of my knowledge, this is the first and only research of this kind," Purjes told Insider via email. "To be clear, there are many anecdotal stories that are similar, but not clinical trials or other rigorous scientific studies."

Purjes said he hopes the trial confirms the hypothesis that a plant-based diet can help with erectile dysfunction, paving the way for more rigorous studies that could eventually bring the research to a mainstream audience.

Any future testing, Cohen added, would have to not only need to include more than three participants to be scientifically valid, but also account for other variables such as exercise, sleep, and other healthy lifestyle markers.

Eating better, exercising, and otherwise living a healthy lifestyle is linked to better sexual health

Diet does have a significant impact on health. What's good for the rest of your body is also good for your sex life — for example, a [2004 study](#) found a healthy diet and exercise could help mitigate erectile dysfunction in [obese](#) men.

However, the study doesn't specify a vegan diet, just one that's high in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fats and cholesterol. Other types of diets that fit this description — like the [Mediterranean diet](#), which includes fish — have also been linked to improvement of erectile dysfunction. Exercise also plays a major role, according to the research.

"Diet and exercise together are the key to success. If you have someone that's eating a poor diet with a lot of meat and saturated fats and things to eating more vegetables, of course it'll be good for you," Cohen said. "Is it going to take your erections from zero to hero? I don't know."

Your most recent meal may also have an immediate impact on your well-being; a [small study](#) found that eating a single fast food meal constricted the blood flow of otherwise healthy college students.

A healthy diet can include meat, but should also have lots of fresh produce, whole grains, and healthy fats, registered dietitian [Bonnie Taub-Dix](#) previously told [Insider](#). And as always, any serious dietary changes should be done gradually and with careful planning.

"You don't have to be a vegan, in this case. Even going from a diet that is very animal product-heavy to one that is more plant-forward would be a good idea," she said.