



Trending Strategies to Pulse Forward



There are multiple benefits for promoting pulses in your clients' diets. Pulses are rising in popularity because of several key trends, including the plant-based food movement, which is good for both people and the planet. Pulses are healthful additions to the diet pattern, for nutritional rewards, as well as health benefits and chronic disease reduction. Increasingly, pulses are turning up in food products and cutting age culinary approaches. Dietitians can help their clients gain the bonuses of including more pulses in their diets with a few key strategies.

The pulses market is growing!

Why? Because of several current trends:

- **Superfood status of pulses**—pulses are well regarded for their nutrition content.
- **Health and wellness benefits**—more research demonstrates health benefits of pulses.
- **Functionality in food products**—pulses are included in more and more food products today.
- **Blends well with flavors**—mild-flavored pulses suit many dishes, from curries and hummus to baked goods and snacks.
- **Rise of plant-based eating**—pulses are a key protein source for plant-based meals, whether people are interested in vegan, vegetarian, or semi-vegetarian eating.
- **Sustainable food source**—people are increasingly interested in choosing sustainable foods, and pulses are the most sustainable protein source.

Pulses are part of the rising plant-based food movement, too.

Here are a few statistics in plant-based food sales to help understand how this trend impacts clients' food decisions (Good Food Institute, 2020).

The retail market for plant-based foods is **worth \$7B, up from \$5.5B in 2019.**

↑ Plant-based food sales **grew 27% in last year.**

↑ Plant-based food sales **grew 43% in last two years.**

↑ Plant-based food sales **grew almost 2.5X faster** than total food sales from 2018-2020.

Pulses are trending in the supermarket aisle, too!

Pulses are featured as a key ingredient in numerous food products today, including:

- Pulse butters
- Hummus and dips
- Sprouted, fermented pulses
- Pulse pasta
- Pulse flours
- Heirloom beans
- Meat and dairy alternatives
- Aquafaba using pulse liquid
- Pea protein as ingredient
- Pulse ingredients in snacks, bars, baby foods, ice cream, and more!



There are multiple health benefits from consuming more pulses in the diet, including:

- **Star nutrition:** Pulses contain at least **20% DV fiber, folate, manganese;** at least **10% DV protein, potassium, iron, magnesium, copper;** **6-9% DV selenium;** plus **phytochemicals** (alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins, tannins, phenolic compounds) 
- Excellent nutrient density and nutrient to cost analysis score in pulses as a category 
- Regular pulse consumption is linked with:
 - Lower blood cholesterol
 - Higher intake of fiber
 - Lower body weight
 - Lower risk of heart disease
 - Lower risk of hypertension
 - Lower risk of some types of cancer
 - Lower risk of diabetes

There are numerous opportunities for RDs to pulse forward with their clients and communities in order to promote healthy, budget-friendly, delicious pulses in their diets, including the following strategies:

Educate consumers about pulses with these tips:

- Turn to pulses for **gluten-free eating**
- Rely on pulses for your **vegetarian meal option**
- **Trim your food budget** dollars with pulses
- Learn more about pulses to increase your ability to include them in meals
- Use **canned pulses** as an easy go-to in cooking
- Celebrate **heritage pulses** as another alternative
- Include pulses in all meal occasions, from **breakfast and snacks to lunch and dinner—even dessert**



Promote the Half Cup Habit as recommended by the DGAs.



**3 SERVINGS PER WEEK of
1/2 CUP COOKED PULSES**

Counter pulse barriers to increase the potential for including more healthy pulses in diets.

Here are a few common barriers:

- **GI distress:** Gradually introduce in diet, soak, cook thoroughly, sprout, and include more water in diet overall
- **Confusions on cooking techniques:** Introduce techniques (soak or quick soak), use appliances (Instant Pot or slow cooker), and try canned
- **Clear up misperceptions about antinutrients:** Soak beans, discard soaking water, cook thoroughly to reduce antinutrients.

Develop pulse samplings to create easy visual displays to educate clients.

These can be featured at health fairs, group classes, and in workplace wellness settings. Here are a few ideas:

- **Dried pulse visuals:** include a variety of dried pulses in glass jars, with recipes for the various types
- **Basic bean sampling:** provide a variety of cooked beans with spoons for sampling and recipes for using the types displayed.
- **Mediterranean cooking class:** include classic pulse recipes, like hummus and falafels.
- **New pulse products sampling:** include a variety of pulse products to sample, including pea protein smoothies, chickpea ice cream, pulse crackers, and pulse pasta
- **Pulse smoothie sampling:** blend up a pulse smoothie and pour into small cups for sampling; provide recipe.
- **Pulse recipe sampling:** Cook up a pulse recipe, such as black bean brownies or lentil salad, to sample and provide recipe.



Plan pulse culinary demos to increase clients' knowledge.

Some topics for cooking demos include:

- **Dried pulse basics:** demonstrate how to cook dried beans from start to finish.
- **Power bowls:** demonstrate how to make pulse power bowls with pulses, grains and vegetables.
- **Mediterranean cooking class:** include classic pulse recipes, like hummus and falafels.
- **Plant-based cooking class:** include pulse plant-based recipes, such as chickpea curry and veggie burgers.
- **Global foods cooking class:** include a variety of cultural pulse recipes, such as red beans and rice, dal, and mung bean stir-fry.
- **How to make aquafaba:** demonstrate the technique for making aquafaba and using it in a recipe, such as cookies and bars.
- **Meal prep:** demonstrate how to create healthful meal prep bowls with pulses.



Share the pulse love on social media to promote more appreciation for pulses, sharing recipes, videos, and tips.

 #lovepulses #halfcuphabit #plantprotein #pulseforward

VISIT USAPulses.org/nutrition-professionals for more information and Pulses.org/us/pulse-recipes for more ways to enjoy pulses!

