

KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™

Guide to a Vegan/Vegetarian Diet

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, following a vegetarian eating pattern has been associated with lower levels of obesity, decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, and lower total mortality compared to following a non-vegetarian diet¹. It may also save you money! If you're interested in trying a vegetarian diet, there are a few things for you to consider.

What type of Vegetarianism is right for you?

At its most basic, a vegetarian diet follows a plant-based eating pattern that excludes various types of animal-based products. There are several variations of vegetarianism that accommodate varying lifestyles and motivations²:

- **Strict Vegetarianism or Vegan:** this is the strictest form of the Vegetarian diet. It excludes all animal products including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, gelatin, honey, milk, cheese, and other dairy products.
- **Lacto-Vegetarian Diet:** a version of vegetarianism that excludes meat, fish, poultry, and eggs, but includes dairy products.
- **Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian:** this diet excludes meat, poultry, and fish but allows for the consumption of dairy products and eggs.



What nutrients do you need to keep in mind?

A vegetarian diet can be healthful, but without a little planning, it may also be lacking some key nutrients. What are some nutrients of particular concern³?

Calcium and Vitamin D

If you are following a form of vegetarianism that doesn't allow for dairy products, you may have inadequate amounts of calcium and Vitamin D in your diet. Vegetarian sources of calcium and Vitamin D include: Fortified soy milk, rice milk, or orange juice (Calcium and Vitamin D), fortified ready-to-

eat cereal (Calcium and Vitamin D), calcium-set tofu (Calcium), and eggs (Vitamin D).

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is only found in animal-based products including eggs and dairy products. If you are eliminating all animal-based food sources, a supplement is recommended in addition to eating fortified ready-to-eat cereals.

Protein

It's a common misperception that vegetarian diets are low in protein. There are many protein options in a vegetarian diet including: Beans (Black, Navy, Pinto, Cannellini, etc.), dairy products, eggs, nut butters and soy products (tofu and tempeh).

Don't forget— your local Registered Dietitian can help you transition to a vegetarian diet and ensure you are meeting all of your nutritional needs.

Keys to Better Health™ offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags!

Resources:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010. Accessed December 15, 2015.
2. Vegetarian Lifestyle. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website. <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/vegetarian-and-special-diets/vegetarian-lifestyle>. Published February 5, 2014. Accessed December 15, 2015.
3. Food Sources of 5 Important Nutrients for Vegetarians. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website. <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/vegetarian-and-special-diets/food-sources-of-important-nutrients-for-vegetarians>. Published November 12, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015.

