



# Food Facts

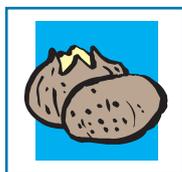
## Vegetarian Diets

### Keeping a Healthy Balance

**B**eing vegetarian means different things to different people. Some people include 'white' meats, such as fish or chicken (semi-vegetarian). Others avoid all meat but still enjoy dairy products and eggs (lacto-ovo-vegetarian). Vegans avoid using any animal product, from meat and eggs to leather shoes. Whichever type of vegetarian you are, you still need to make sure you get all the nutrients your body needs. An easy way to plan your diet is to think about the food groups.

#### Bread, other cereals and potatoes

This food group, especially wholegrain products and fortified breakfast cereals, contributes essential nutrients such as iron and zinc. These foods should form the basis of every meal.



#### Focus on fruit and vegetables

Aim for five servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Those



containing vitamin C, including citrus fruits, berries, melon, tomatoes and peppers, increase the absorption of iron from non-meat foods, so are especially valuable if you are vegetarian. Try and have a glass of orange juice with your breakfast cereal perhaps or peppers in a stir-fry with brown rice.



#### Alternatives to meat

It is especially important if you are vegetarian to get your protein, iron and zinc from sources other than meat. Choose from the foods listed below - in combination with grain foods, these provide us with protein equivalent to that from animal foods:

- Soya-based foods, including tofu
- Beans, lentils and chickpeas (dried or tinned)
- Seeds, nuts and nut butters, like peanut butter (although these tend to be high in fat)
- Eggs (if you eat them)



#### Don't forget dairy foods or their alternatives

Be sure to include these foods several times a day if you don't eat dairy foods as you need to keep your calcium intake up:

- Calcium-fortified soya milk, puddings and orange juice
- Tofu
- Brown or white bread
- Dried fruit, eg apricots
- Green leafy vegetables (apart from spinach)
- Nuts and sesame seeds
- Tinned salmon & sardines (if you eat fish)



#### Other concerns

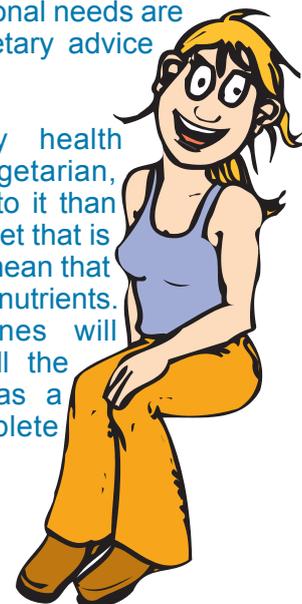


If you rarely or never eat animal foods you need to make sure you are getting enough vitamin D, vitamin B2 and vitamin B12. Vitamin D is generated by sunlight on our skin, but if you don't go outside much or if you have dark skin, you should include fortified margarine or spreads and fortified breakfast cereals in your diet. You may also need a supplement. For vitamin B2 and B12 try to have fortified breakfast cereal, soya foods or yeast extract regularly - otherwise consider a supplement.

If you are a vegan you should also include small amounts of iodised salt or seaweed. It is also important to take extra care during pregnancy, breastfeeding, weaning or in childhood to make sure that all nutritional needs are being met. Additional dietary advice may be needed.

While there are many health benefits to being a vegetarian, remember, there is more to it than just giving up meat. Any diet that is not planned properly can mean that you miss out on essential nutrients. Following these guidelines will ensure that you enjoy all the health benefits as well as a nutritious and complete vegetarian diet.

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