Eat Well the Vegetarian Way

What is a Vegetarian Diet?

Most vegetarians do not eat meat, fish and any products made from these animals. Some will eat fish but not meat (semi-vegetarian), whilst others also exclude eggs (lacto-vegetarian).

Is a Vegetarian Diet Healthy?

Yes, a vegetarian diet can be a very healthy way of eating, but like any other diet, it needs to be properly planned.
Choose a wide variety of foods following these guidelines for a balanced vegetarian diet:

- Eat plenty of foods rich in starch and fibre (bread, cereals, potatoes)
- Look after the vitamins and minerals in your food
- Choose fatty and sugary foods less often
- If you drink alcohol, keep within sensible limits

**Fruit and Vegetables**
- All types of fruit - fresh, frozen, tinned
- All types of vegetable - fresh, frozen, tinned
- Sprouting beans, e.g. bean sprouts, alfalfa
- Eat 5 or more servings per day
- One serving is:
  - 2-3 tablespoons of vegetables
  - 1 apple/banana/orange
  - 1 small glass of fruit juice
  - 1 small bowl of stewed fruit

**Bread, Other Cereals, Potatoes (Starchy foods)**
- Bread and rolls
- Chapattis
- Pasta
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Breakfast cereals
- Oats (porridge)
- Millet, buckwheat
- Flours - wheat, soya
- Eat at least 4 servings per day
- One serving is:
  - 1 slice of bread/1 chappati
  - 1 bowl of cereal/porridge
  - 2 egg-sized potatoes
  - 2 tablespoons of cooked rice/pasta

**Alternatives to Meat and Fish**
- Eggs
- Beans - haricot, kidney, butter, mung
- Pulses - split peas, chickpeas
- Lentils - green, brown, split red
- Nuts
- Soya products - TVP, tofu
- Seeds - pumpkin, sesame, sunflower
- Eat 2 servings per day
- One serving is:
  - 1 egg
  - 3 tablespoons of beans, pulses (cooked)

**Milk and Dairy Products**
- All types of milk
- Yogurt
- Fromage frais
- Cheeses
- Eat 3 servings per day
- One serving is:
  - 1/3 pint of milk
  - 150g (5oz) can of yogurt
  - 25g (1oz) cheese
  - 1 portion of milk

**Foods Containing Fat and/or Sugar**
- Margarine/butter
- Cooking oils/fats
- Sugary foods and drinks
- Sweets and chocolates
- Crisps and other savoury snacks
- Biscuits and cakes
- Pastry products
- Eat smaller amounts of these
- Choose these only occasionally
Should I Take Extra Vitamins or Minerals?

All the vitamins and minerals needed by the body can be provided by a vegetarian diet, so supplements should not be necessary.

Make sure you eat foods containing iron and calcium every day:

Iron
Choose from pulses, beans, whole grain bread and cereals, nuts, dried fruit, eggs, green leafy vegetables e.g. spinach and broccoli.
You will use the iron best from the foods above when eaten with foods rich in Vitamin C, which include unsweetened fruit juice, raw or lightly cooked fruit and vegetables.
Try not to drink tea with meals as this prevents some of the iron being absorbed from the food.

Calcium
Choose from milk and dairy products, green leafy vegetables, spinach, broccoli, dried fruit, seeds, bread, nuts.

If you have excluded all animal foods from your diet it will be important to watch your Vitamin D and Vitamin B12 intakes as these may be lacking. Ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian for further help.

For Further Information, Contact:

The Vegetarian Society
Parkdale
Durham Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 4QG

Produced by:
The Centre for Nutrition & Health Promotion
Demodera
83 Frances Road
Windsor
SL4 3AW
01753 636730