

Exploring Plant Powered Eating

BEING VEGETARIAN

Being a Vegetarian means abstaining from meat. People decide to cut out or eat less meat for many reasons. You may want to cut out meat for health, ethical, religious, cultural or environmental reasons. It can be hard to make changes to your diet and still eat healthy meals. Knowing how to get adequate protein and minerals is key to staying healthy while not eating meat.

1 Vegetarian sources of iron

- pulses, such as kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils
- dried fruit, such as apricots
- dark green vegetables, such as watercress, broccoli and spring greens
- whole grain bread and flour
- fortified cereals (with added iron)
- nuts

2 Good sources of vitamin B12

- milk
- cheese
- eggs
- fortified breakfast cereals
- fortified products

3 Sources of omega-3 fatty acids suitable for vegetarians include

- flaxseed (linseed) oil
- rapeseed oil
- walnuts
- egg enriched with omega-3

When your meals include meat monitor your portions and don't overeat. Choose lean cuts and stay away from oversized portions. A serving of protein is 3 ounces, about the size of a deck of cards. Eating vegetarian all of the time is not necessary for good health, meat in moderation is ok.

Healthy Eating as a Vegetarian

- Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- Base meals on starchy carbohydrates: Starchy foods such as potatoes, bread, cereals, rice and pasta should make up just over a third of the food you eat. Where possible, choose whole grain varieties. Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet. As well as starch, they contain fiber, calcium, iron and B vitamins.
- Dairy or dairy alternatives are needed for calcium. Milk, cheese and yogurt, are good sources of protein, calcium and vitamins A and B12. Alternatives such as fortified unsweetened soymilk, rice and oat drinks, which also contain calcium, green, leafy vegetables, calcium-set tofu and bread are important to have daily.
- Also choose lower sugar options. The health benefits of a vegetarian diet can be canceled out by too much sugar.
- Eat beans, pulses, eggs and other sources of protein. Pulses include beans, peas and lentils. They're a low-fat source of protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals, and count as a portion of vegetables. Nuts and seeds are also a source of protein and other nutrients.



Meatless Options

Plant-based proteins offer many health benefits and can be less expensive than meat. One way to get these benefits is to choose a meatless meal once or twice a week.

You don't have to get rid of all meat all at once. Instead, try easing into meatless meals. Think about going meatless one or two days a week. You may find you'll want to add more days. If you don't like the idea of a whole day without meat start with one meal, perhaps dinner. Plan meals that use your favorite recipes that are typically meatless, such as lasagna, soup, pasta and vegetable salad.

- Beans, peas and lentils can be added to casseroles, soups and salads in place of meat.
- Vegetarian refried beans can be used instead of meat in burritos and tacos.