

# The Key to a Healthy Vegetarian Diet

## Eat a wide variety of low-fat, high fiber foods every day.

Include whole grains, fruits, veggies, beans and peas.

## Eat servings from each food group.

Plan ahead and pack foods to take with you, such as raisins, popcorn, peanut butter, veggie sticks, almonds, and soy drinks.

## Add to your diet; don't deprive yourself.

Eliminating animal products opens up the chance to add many new foods to your diet. Explore different ethnic items, experiment with recipes, and keep an open mind.

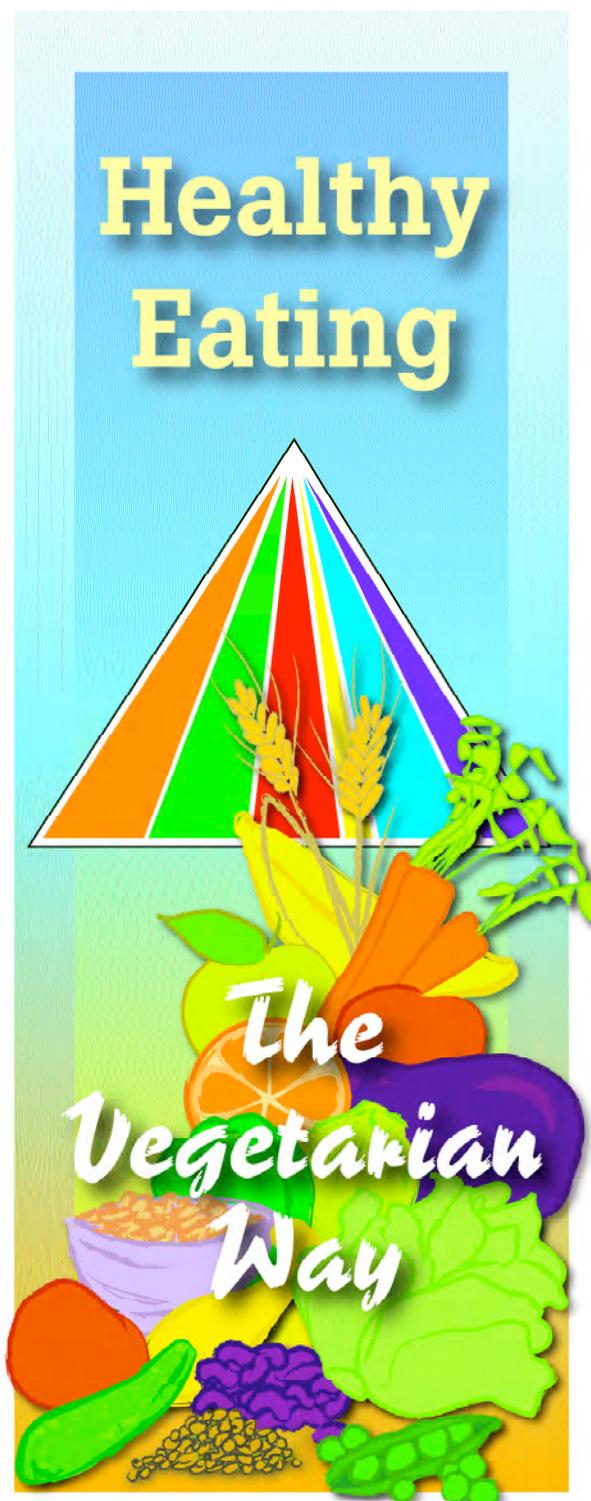
## Keep sweets and high fat foods to a minimum.

Salad dressings, cooking oils, fried foods, and many desserts add extra calories and few nutrients. Don't use these foods in place of your meat group.



Tom Barrett, Mayor  
Bevan K. Baker,  
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# Why choose a vegetarian lifestyle?

## Health Benefits

Vegetarians have a lower risk of heart disease, obesity, stroke, cancer and diabetes.

## Environmental advantages

It takes about 2,500 gallons of water to produce a single pound of beef, where only 250 gallons are used to produce one pound of soybeans.

## Budget

Pound for pound, plant-based protein sources cost less than meat sources of protein.

## Belief in Non-Violence

Many find grave concerns about the raising and slaughtering practices of factory farms.

## Religious beliefs

Many major religions including Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Jainism and Buddhism promote some form of vegetarianism and compassionate living.

## Food Preferences

When more is known about the sources of meat products, many find they do not taste as good.

# What do vegetarians eat?

Nearly all vegetarians share the desire to eat a balanced, plant-based diet and exclude animal products. There are many variations of this practice.

	Plant Products such as fruits, vegetables, legumes/beans, grains, seeds, nuts, cereal, tofu	Dairy Products such as milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, milkshakes, butter	Egg Products such as eggs, custard, pancakes, french toast, some baked items such as muffins, cake	Fish Products such as cod, tuna, catfish, salmon, fish sticks, crab, shrimp, lobster, sushi	Poultry Products such as chicken, turkey, duck, pheasants, chicken broth/soup	Red Meat Products such as hamburger, ribs, steak, pork, hot dogs, bacon, venison, lamb, jerky, gravies
<b>Vegan</b> Includes no animal products						
<b>Lacto</b> Adds dairy products						
<b>Lacto-ovo</b> adds egg products						
<b>Pesco</b> adds fish products						
<b>Semi</b> Adds poultry products						

# Is a vegetarian diet healthy?

Yes. A well-planned vegetarian diet can meet all the recommendations for nutrients, and tends to be lower in calories as well. The key is to consume a variety of foods and the right amount of foods to meet your calorie needs.

**Vegetarians should focus on key nutrients:**

## Protein

Protein has many important functions in the body and is essential for growth and maintenance. Protein needs can easily be met by eating a variety of plant-based foods. Combining different protein sources in the same meal is not necessary. Sources of protein for vegetarians include beans, nuts, nut butters, peas, and soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers). Milk products and eggs are also good protein sources for lacto-ovo vegetarians.

## Iron

Iron functions primarily as a carrier of oxygen in the blood. Iron sources for vegetarians include iron-fortified breakfast cereals, spinach, kidney beans, black-eyed peas, lentils, turnip greens, molasses, whole wheat breads, peas, and some dried fruits (dried apricots, prunes, raisins).

## Calcium

Calcium is used for building bones and teeth and in maintaining bone strength. Sources of calcium for vegetarians include fortified breakfast cereals, soy products (tofu, soy-based beverages), calcium-fortified orange juice, and some dark green leafy vegetables (collard greens, turnip greens, bok choy, mustard greens). Milk products are excellent calcium sources for lacto vegetarians.

# Translating the Pyramid – What do vegetarians need?

Food Group	Suggested Daily Amounts*	Serving Sizes
<b>Grains</b>	6 ounces daily Focus on whole grains, which have more protein and nutrients.	1 ounce is equal to: 1/2 cup of brown rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal; 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal
<b>Vegetables</b>	2 1/2 cups daily Focus on dark green and orange vegetables and those high in protein, such as beans and peas.	1/2 cup is equal to: 1 raw carrot, 1 small tomato, 1/2 cup beans, 4 ounces tofu, 1 cup raw lettuce or greens
<b>Fruits</b>	2 cups daily Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits.	1/2 cup is equal to: 1/2 cup juice, 16 grapes, 1 snack container of applesauce or canned fruit, 1/4 cup raisins
<b>Dairy Products</b>	Dairy is optional; calcium is not. Include 3 cups of calcium-rich, low-fat foods in your daily diet.	1 cup is equal to: 1 1/2 ounces cheddar, 6 ounces yogurt, 1 cup of calcium-fortified juices, cereals, breads, soy beverages, or rice beverages
<b>Meat and Beans</b>	Meats are optional; protein and iron are not. If you choose to eat eggs, limit to 3–4 yolks per week. Include a variety of beans, peas, nuts and seeds.	1 ounce is equal to: 1 egg, 12 almonds, 1/4 cup tofu or black beans, 1 tbsp peanut butter, 1 cup lentil soup
<b>Fats, Sweets, Alcohol</b>	Aim for less than 6 teaspoons of oils a day, and avoid trans fats when possible. Limit your extra fats and sugars.	1 teaspoon of oil is equal to: 1 tbsp margarine, 1 ounce of nuts, 1/2 avocado

## Zinc

Zinc is necessary for many biochemical reactions and also helps the immune system function properly. Sources of zinc for vegetarians include many types of beans (white beans, kidney beans, and chickpeas), zinc-fortified breakfast cereals, wheat germ, and pumpkin seeds. Milk products are a zinc source for lacto vegetarians.

## Vitamin B12

B12 is found in animal products and some fortified foods. Sources of vitamin B12 for vegetarians include milk products, eggs, and foods that have been fortified with vitamin B12. These include breakfast cereals, soy-based beverages, veggie burgers, and nutritional yeast.

**Get a variety – Mix it up!**  
 Plan your meals around a vegetable such as stuffed tomatoes or peppers, grilled portabellas, or baked eggplant.  
 Experiment with new grains such as barley, quinoa, wild rice and couscous.  
 Aim for a variety of whole foods at every meal. Mixing red beans, salsa, and brown rice makes a great easy main dish.  
 Know your calcium sources and include them every day.  
 Make a grocery list that includes seasonal produce to help save money.  
 Reach for fruits instead of sweets.

# Substitute it!

There are easy ways to change recipes that call for eggs, milk, or meat:

## Instead of Meats

Meat “analogs” are made from plant sources, but look and taste like meats.

## Tempeh

Cultured soybeans with a chewy texture. It can be sliced and fried, or used in soups, spreads, salads, and sandwiches.

## Textured Soy Protein (TSP)

Compressed soy flour. Prepared, it has a texture like ground beef and is great in chili, tacos, or sloppy joes.

## Tofu

Made from soybeans. Tofu can be tossed into a stir fry, marinated, baked, or grilled. Try the firm or extra firm varieties, and freeze for a “meatier” texture.

## Beans

Beans come in many varieties and can be added to soup, dips, chili, and stew.

### Instead of eggs in a recipe, try

- 1/2 of a small mashed banana
- 1/4 cup applesauce
- 2 Tbsp. Corn starch
- 1/4 cup tofu (silken)

### Instead of dairy in a recipe, try

- Soy, rice, or nut milks
- Soy yogurt