

WHY VEGANISM?

People choose to be vegan for health, environmental, and/or ethical reasons. For example, some vegans feel that one promotes the meat industry by consuming eggs and dairy products. That is, once dairy cows or egg laying chickens are too old to be productive, they are often sold as meat: and since male calves do not produce milk, they usually are raised for veal or other products. Some people avoid these items because of conditions associated with their production.

Many vegans chose this lifestyle in order to promote a more humane and caring world. They know they are not perfect, but believe they have a responsibility to try to do their best, while not being judgemental of others.

COMMON VEGAN FOODS

Oatmeal, stir-fried vegetables, cereal, toast, orange juice, peanut butter on whole wheat bread, frozen fruit desserts, lentil soup, salad bar items like chickpeas and three bean salad, dates, apples, macaroni, fruit smoothies, popcorn, spaghetti, vegetarian baked beans, guacamole, chili...

VEGANS ALSO EAT

Tofu lasagna, homemade pancakes without eggs, hummus, eggless cookies, soy ice cream, tempeh, corn chowder, soy yogurt, rice pudding, fava beans, banana muffins, spinach pies, oat nut burgers, falafel, corn fritters, French toast made with soy milk, soy hot dogs, vegetable burgers, pumpkin casserole, scrambled tofu, seitan...

VEGAN DIETS IN A NUTSHELL

WHAT IS A VEGAN?

Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or poultry. Vegans, in addition to being vegetarian, do not use other animal products and by-products such as eggs, dairy products, honey, leather, fur, silk, wool, cosmetics, and soaps derived from animal products.

VEGAN NUTRITION

The key to a nutritionally sound vegan diet is variety. A healthy and varied vegan diet includes fruits, vegetables, plenty of leafy greens, whole grain products, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

PROTEIN

It is very easy for a vegan diet to meet the recommendations for protein as long as calorie intake is adequate. Strict protein planning or combining is not necessary. The key is to eat a varied diet.

SOURCES OF PROTEIN

Almost all foods except for alcohol, sugar, and fats are good sources of protein. Vegan sources include: potatoes, whole wheat bread, rice, broccoli, spinach, almonds, peas, chickpeas, peanut butter, tofu, soy milk, lentils, kale...

For example, if part of a day's menu included the following foods, you would meet the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein for an adult male:

1 cup oatmeal, 1 cup soy milk,
2 slices whole wheat bread, 1 bagel,
2 Tablespoons peanut butter,
1 cup vegetarian baked beans,
5 ounces tofu, 2 Tablespoons almonds,
1 cup broccoli, and 1 cup brown rice.

FAT

Vegan diets are free of cholesterol and are generally low in fat. Thus eating a vegan diet makes it easy to conform to recommendations given to reduce the risk of major chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. High-fat foods, which should be used sparingly, include oils, margarine, nuts, nut butters, seed butters, avocado, and coconut.

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is not found in the vegan diet but can be made by humans following exposure to sunlight. At least ten to fifteen minutes of summer sun on hands and face two to three times a week is recommended for adults so that vitamin D production can occur.

CALCIUM

Calcium, needed for strong bones, is found in dark green vegetables, tofu processed with calcium sulfate, and many other foods commonly eaten by vegans. Calcium requirements for those on lower protein, plant-based protein diets may be somewhat lower than requirements for those eating a higher protein, flesh-based diet. However, it is important for vegans to regularly eat foods high in calcium and/or use a vegan calcium supplement.

CALCIUM CONTENT OF SELECTED FOODS

Soy or rice milk, commercial, calcium-fortified, plain	8 oz.	150-500 mg
Collard greens, cooked	1 cup	357 mg
Blackstrap molasses	2 TB	342 mg
Tofu, processed with calcium sulfate	4 oz.	200-330 mg
Calcium-fortified orange juice	8 oz.	300 mg
Tofu, processed with nigari	4 oz.	80-230 mg
Kale, cooked	1 cup	176 mg
Tahini	2 TB	128 mg
Almonds	1/4 cup	97 mg

Other good sources of calcium include: okra, sesame seeds, turnip greens, soybeans, figs, tempeh, almond butter, broccoli, bok choy, commercial soy yogurt...

The RDA for calcium for adults 19 through 50 years is 1000 milligrams/day.

Note: It appears that oxalic acid, which is found in spinach, rhubarb, chard, and beet greens, binds with calcium and

reduces calcium absorption. Calcium is well absorbed from other dark green vegetables.

ZINC

Vegan diets can provide zinc at levels close to or even higher than the RDA. Zinc is found in grains, legumes, and nuts.

IRON

Dried beans and dark green vegetables are especially good sources of iron, better on a per calorie basis than meat. Iron absorption is increased markedly by eating foods containing vitamin C along with foods containing iron.

SOURCES OF IRON

Soybeans, lentils, blackstrap molasses, kidney beans, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, seitan, Swiss chard, tempeh, black beans, prune juice, beet greens, tahini, peas, figs, bulghur, bok choy, raisins, watermelon, millet, kale...

COMPARISON OF IRON SOURCES

FOOD	IRON (mg)
1 cup cooked soybeans	8.8
2 tablespoons blackstrap molasses	7.0
1 cup cooked lentils	6.6
1 cup cooked kidney beans	5.2
1 cup cooked chickpeas	4.7
1 cup cooked lima beans	4.5
1 cup cooked Swiss chard	4.0
1/8 medium watermelon	1.0



VITAMIN B12

The requirement for vitamin B12 is very low. Non-animal sources include Grape-Nuts cereal (1/2 cup supplies the adult RDA) and Red Star nutritional yeast T6635 also known as Vegetarian Support Formula (1 to 2 teaspoons supplies the adult RDA). It is especially important for pregnant and lactating women, infants, and children to have reliable sources of vitamin B12 in their diets. Numerous foods are fortified with B12, but sometimes companies change what they do. So always read labels carefully or write the companies.

Tempeh, miso, and seaweed are often labeled as having large amounts of vitamin B12. However, these products are not reliable sources of the vitamin because the amount of vitamin B12 present depends on the type of processing the food undergoes.

Other sources of vitamin B12 are fortified soy milk (such as EdenSoy Extra and Sovex Better Than Milk? Caseinate Free), vitamin B12-fortified meat analogues, and vitamin B12 supplements. There are supplements which do not contain animal products. Vegetarians who are not vegan can also obtain vitamin B12 from dairy products and eggs.

The contents of this brochure and our other publications are not intended to provide personal medical advice. Medical advice should be obtained from a qualified health professional.