



FOR YOUTH

A Balanced and Healthy Vegetarian or Vegan Diet



What foods does a vegetarian pantry include?

Here are some foods to have on hand for quicker and easier meal preparation:

1. Ready-to-eat, whole-grain breakfast cereals, and quick-cooking whole-grain cereals such as oatmeal.
2. Whole-grain breads and crackers, such as rye, whole wheat, and mixed grain.
3. Other grains such as barley and bulgur wheat.
4. Canned beans, such as pinto, black beans, and garbanzo beans.
5. Plant-based proteins like tofu, tempeh, and seitan.
6. Milk, yogurt, and fortified soy substitutes.
7. Rice (including brown, wild, etc.).
8. Pasta (now available in whole wheat, spinach, and other flavors) with tomato sauce and canned beans and/or chopped veggies.
9. Corn or flour tortillas.
10. Vegetarian soups like lentil or minestrone.
11. Plain frozen vegetables.
12. Frozen fruit juice concentrate.
13. Nut spreads (e.g. peanut or almond butter).
14. Canned and frozen fruit.

Being vegetarian can mean different things for different people. Some people exclude meat, poultry and fish, and include dairy and eggs (ovo-lacto-vegetarian); some exclude meat and eggs and include dairy (lacto-vegetarian); some exclude meat and dairy but include eggs (ovo-vegetarian); vegans exclude meat, dairy, eggs and other animal products from their diets.

In general, all vegetarians include fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, seeds and nuts in their diets.

Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App

Search Parenting at Meal and Playtime on Apple Store or Google Play



App Highlights...

- Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
- Resources for parents organized by age
- Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
- Easy sign-up
- Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more



Resources:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/tips-for-vegetarian.html> is the federal website for the current recommendations to eating healthy, including tips for vegetarians.

<http://www.eatright.org/> is the official website of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and is a great resource for information regarding vegetarian diets.

<http://www.vrg.org/> is a good website for recipes and information about nutrients like protein and calcium.

Michael Pollan's Food Rules: An eater's manual is a simple yet impactful book with 3 simple rules – 'eat food, not too much and mostly plants'. The book gives many easy to follow suggestions on how to follow these rules.

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FOR CAREGIVERS

A Balanced and Healthy Vegetarian or Vegan Diet

Is there a potential deficit of certain nutrients in vegetarian, especially vegan, diets?

The key to maintaining optimal health as a vegetarian or vegan is eating healthy and well-planned meals. Here are key nutrients to keep in mind:

- **Iron** – Non-heme sources of iron (including green leafy vegetables, beans, raisins, watermelon, and tahini) are not as readily absorbed as heme-sources (meat, fish and poultry). Eating vitamin C-rich foods like bell peppers, guava, green leafy vegetables, lemons and oranges with foods high in non-heme iron makes it more available to the body.
- **Protein** – Beans, lentils, tofu, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, nuts, peanut butter, eggs and dairy are good sources of protein.
- **Vitamin D** – Consumption of mushrooms, yeast-based products, products fortified with vitamin D (dairy and soymilk), and oral intake of vitamin D supplements help to maintain adequate vitamin D status.
- **Vitamin B12** – Milk, eggs, nutritional yeast, B12 supplements and foods like soymilk that are fortified with B12 are important vegetarian sources of B12.
- **Calcium** – Good sources of calcium are green leafy vegetables, dairy, tofu, calcium-fortified foods like orange juice, soy milk, almond milk.
- **Omega 3 fatty acids** – Milk fortified with DHA (docosa hexaenoic acid), ALA (alpha-linoleic acid) and algal DHA supplements are the main source of omega 3 fatty acids for vegans and vegetarians. Flax seeds, walnuts, canola oil, and soybeans are rich in ALA.
- **Zinc** – Zinc-rich foods include grains, nuts and legumes.

Looking to eat balanced and healthier vegetarian meals?

Try cooking at home. This allows you to control what goes into the food you eat (oil, salt, spices). Also, use fresh, seasonal produce to enhance the taste and visual appeal of your meals.

- **Keep it simple** – Explore quick and easy recipes and create your own using few ingredients.
- **Go whole grain** – Whole grains and beans are rich in B vitamins, iron and fiber. They also have complex carbohydrates, which help lower glycemic load.
- **Plan ahead** – Make weekly meal plans and shop ahead. Soaking and cooking beans, and washing and chopping vegetables in advance can be helpful. Buying pre-washed and pre-cut or frozen vegetables and fruits is another option.
- **Include variety** – Different colored fruits and vegetables, and different types of beans or grains not only make eating more interesting, but also lessen the risk of nutritional deficiencies. Buy local and seasonal produce – shopping for produce at a farmer's market is a great idea!
- **Use vegan meats sparingly** – These can be good as occasional treats, but because they are highly-processed foods made from wheat gluten or textured soy protein, they should not be eaten regularly.
- **Regularly check vitamin D and B12 levels** – Take supplements if your levels of these vitamins are low.
- **Reduce consumption of sugar and high-fat foods** – Candies, sweets, cakes, cookies and fried foods are high in calories but low in nutrients.
- **Always consult your doctor.**

