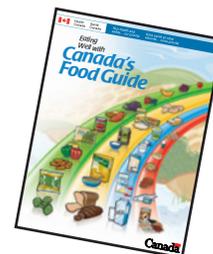


Vegetarian Nutrition for Youth

Being a vegetarian is more complex than just avoiding meat. A healthy vegetarian needs lots of variety from all four food groups in Canada's Food Guide. To get the nutrients you need to be healthy and feel energized, work towards checking off all of the questions below.



Healthy Vegetarian Checklist:

- I enjoy eating a variety of foods.
- I eat meat alternatives such as beans, lentils, tofu, nut butters, and eggs everyday.
- I eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- At least half of my grain products are whole grains.
- I drink milk or milk alternatives (e.g., fortified/enriched soy beverages) everyday.

Create your own vegetarian food guide using “My Food Guide” link on the Health Canada website www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.

Making the switch:

One of the most important things about being a vegetarian is replacing meat with an alternative.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Add beans, lentils, eggs or nuts to salads and sandwiches or just eat them on their own.
- Replace meat with tofu or beans in spaghetti sauce, lasagna, and stir-fries
- Try meat replacements like veggie patties, veggie ground round, tofu “chicken” and veggie sausages
- Spread nut or seed butters on whole wheat bread or toast

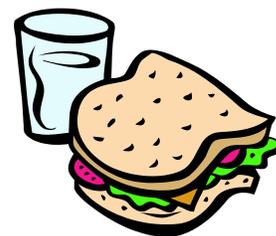


When eating out, try dishes from different cultures:

- Chickpea curry or daal with rice
- Bean burritos, taco or enchiladas
- Noodle bowl with tofu and Asian vegetables
- Falafel or hummus with pita
- Vegetarian moussaka and lentil soup
- Edamame, vegetable sushi roll and tamago (egg)

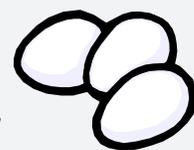
Try some easy meal ideas:

- Burrito with a whole wheat tortilla, refried black beans, salsa, cheese and lettuce
- Sandwich on whole wheat bread with hummus, grated carrot and lettuce
- Brown rice bowl with marinated tofu cubes, steamed veggies and salad dressing or low-salt soy sauce
- Whole wheat spaghetti noodles, stir fried broccoli, carrots and spinach with garlic and topped with parmesan or feta cheese
- Pizza on whole wheat pita pocket or English muffin with tomato sauce, mushrooms, zucchini, pineapple and cheese



Some tips to keep you healthy:

- ❖ **Eat 3 meals plus some healthy snacks each day.**
- ❖ **Choose at least 3 out of the 4 food groups for meals from *Canada's Food Guide*:** fruits and vegetables, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meat alternatives (beans, nuts, tofu, lentils, eggs, etc).
- ❖ **Choose at least 2 out of 4 food groups at each snack.** For example, try peanut butter with crackers, hummus with pita bread, or yogurt and fruit.
- ❖ **Eat iron-rich and zinc-rich foods every day** such as beans, lentils, dark green vegetables, tofu, nuts, seeds, whole grains and iron-fortified cereals. Vegetarians need to eat more iron because plant-based iron is not absorbed as well as animal-based iron.
- ❖ **Include omega-3 fats in your diet** such as omega-3 eggs, soybeans, tofu, walnuts, and ground flax seed as well as canola, flax seed, chia seeds, and hemp hearts. Fish and seafood also contain omega-3 fats.



Vegans

If you are vegan (avoiding all animal products including eggs and dairy products), talk to a dietitian. A dietitian can help you plan your food choices to make sure you get enough of the nutrients you need to be healthy, including protein, iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, and omega-3 fats.

Supplements

Health Canada recommends that anyone who might get pregnant take a multivitamin containing folic acid everyday. Also, you may need to take a supplement if you avoid certain food groups. For example, if you avoid milk products, make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D. Speak to a dietitian or health care provider about supplement use.



For more information:

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC Call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian
or email at <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html>
Food Sources of Calcium and Vitamin D www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile68e.stm
Iron in Foods www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile68d.stm
The Vegetarian Resource Group www.vrg.org
Canada's Food Guide www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
Create your own vegetarian food guide using "My Food Guide"
Dietitians of Canada www.dietitians.ca
Eat Right Ontario <https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Vegetarianism/>
Vegetarian and vegan books by dietitian, Vesanto Melina <http://nutrispeak.com>

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>
or email phe@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **BB.250.V44**

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