

A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Vegetarian

Many people choose to follow a vegetarian diet for a variety of different reasons. Regardless of your reason, it's important to be aware of the potential benefits and risks of eliminating meat from your diet.

Benefits

- Increased fruit and vegetable intake
- Decreased saturated fat intake possible
- More plant-based protein sources
- Benefits to the environment
- Decreased food cost possible

Risks

- Nutrient deficiencies possible
- May lead to unhealthy weight loss
- Can be difficult to manage at social events
- May develop into excessive dietary restrictions

Eating a variety of foods will help you meet the recommended daily intake for vitamins and minerals. However, following a vegetarian diet can require attention to ensure that you are getting all of the nutrients your body needs. Some common nutrients that may need extra attention in a vegetarian diet include:

- Iron:** a diet lacking this mineral can result in heart problems, anemia, and fatigue
 - Look for iron in pumpkin seeds, broccoli, spinach, and fortified cereals and grains.
 - Cooking in a cast iron skillet will increase iron content of any food.
 - For maximum absorption, couple iron sources with a vitamin C rich food (orange juice, broccoli, or kiwi fruit).
- B-12:** a diet lacking this vitamin can cause weakness, anemia, pale skin, and diarrhea
 - B-12 is found in eggs, milk, soy milk, fortified cereals, and cheese. Many vegetarians need to supplement with B-12 injections, especially vegans.
- Calcium:** an important mineral in bone health, blood clotting, and nerve health
 - Good sources of calcium include all dairy, broccoli, spinach, almonds, hummus, and fortified juices and cereals.
- Protein:** a deficiency in this macronutrient can cause fatigue, brittle hair and nails, muscle loss/weakness
 - Vegetarian sources of protein include eggs, milk, yogurt, nuts, legumes, quinoa, cheese, tofu, and tempeh.

**With careful monitoring of your diet,
vegetarianism can be a healthy choice for you!**

Please call (512) 475-8252 for more information.



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