

GOING VEGETARIAN



Have you ever considered following a vegetarian diet but not sure if you can give up steak the rest of your life? There are many benefits to following a vegetarian eating plan, but it doesn't always mean that you can't eat ANY meat. Here are some definitions for different types of vegetarianism:

Vegetarian – generally a term for someone who does not eat any meat

Ovo-vegetarian – does not eat meat and dairy products but will eat eggs

Lacto-vegetarian – does not eat meat and eggs but will eat dairy products

Flexitarian or **semi-vegetarian**- eats mostly plant-based foods but may occasionally include meat, dairy, eggs, poultry, and fish in small amounts

Pescatarian – does not eat meat but will eat fish

Pollo-vegetarian – does not eat meat or fish but will eat chicken

Vegan – does not eat any animal products, including honey and gelatin

Each person has their own reasons for eating a vegetarian diet, and your reasons may influence the type of vegetarian diet you follow. It is well documented that a vegetarian diet can provide health benefits. Vegetarians tend to have less heart disease; lower cancer risks, and a plant-based diet can contribute to the prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Other reasons people choose a vegetarian diet include concern for the treatment of animals, religious reasons and the ecological sustainability of the diet.

If you choose to avoid animal products, there are some nutrients that need to be consumed deliberately in order to meet the body's needs. Some of these nutrients and food sources are:

Vitamin B12

- Vitamin B₁₂-fortified foods including fortified nutritional yeast, soy milk, meat substitutes and ready-to-eat cereals (be sure to check the label as not all products on the market are fortified with vitamin B₁₂).
- Dairy products
- Eggs

Calcium

- Low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese
- Fortified plant-based milks such as soy or almond
- Fortified ready-to-eat cereals
- Calcium-fortified juice
- Calcium-set tofu
- Some leafy green vegetables including collard greens, turnip greens and kale
- Broccoli
- Beans including soybeans, chickpeas and black beans
- Almonds and almond butter



Iron

- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Soybeans
- Some dark leafy greens including spinach and chard
- Beans

Vitamin D

- Eggs
- Vitamin D-fortified soy milk, cow's milk, orange juice, and ready-to-eat cereals

If you are interested in becoming vegetarian, here are some resources that can get you started:

becomingvegan.ca

happycow.net

vegfamily.com

vrg.org

