



Congratulations! You've decided to do what's best for the environment, the animals and your health, so you've gone vegetarian or vegan (veg~n).

If you are living at home with your family, you may meet some initial resistance to your decision.

Your parents and family just want to know that you will stay strong and healthy on a veg~n diet, so it is best to have nutritional information at your fingertips to reassure them.

On the next page you'll find some nutritional information. Try not to rely on processed foods such as vegan burgers, pizzas and biscuits, and be sure to include whole foods (such as legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables) in your diet. The last thing you want is to get sick and having people pressure you to give up veg~nism!

QUICK FOOD IDEAS

- smoothies (milk or yoghurt, banana, fresh fruit, and optional ground flaxseed, spirulina, wheat germ)
- muesli bars
- nuts, seeds and raisins or trail mix
- fruit
- plain popcorn
- carrot/celery/vegetable sticks with hummus
- yoghurt
- wholegrain sandwiches
- dried fruit (especially prunes and apricots)
- bean tacos or burritos, and nachos using canned chilli beans on corn chips
- baked beans on toast
- crackers
- bliss balls
- cereal

COOKING AND SHOPPING

Your parents might not have experience with veg~n shopping or cooking. You can help them by getting a good veg~n cookbook and trying out different recipes. Find veg~n alternatives that are cheap and easy to find. Most supermarkets stock a wide variety of veg~n products now. If you show your parents you are prepared and you know what you are doing, they will feel more relaxed with your decision.

PRESSURE

Once you have made your decision, people who love you may still try to get you to change your mind. For example, they may say, “Here, can’t you eat just a little meat on this special occasion?”

Some possible responses are below:

“No, thanks. I’m happy with what I have.”

“Are you concerned about my well-being? Trust me, I have carefully looked into this issue and I know how to maintain a healthy veg~n diet. I know what I am doing.”

“If you would like to find out more about veg~nism to put your mind at rest, I can send you some information about it”

“Let’s talk about this after the meal. I’m enjoying eating right now.”

You could then choose a more appropriate time to respond, when you feel ready. Using a sense of humour can help to relieve a tense situation. It also indicates that you are quite happy with your choice and therefore not ruffled by any teasing. Change of any kind can be unsettling to your friends and family. It can also be interpreted as a judgement of their choices, so extend kindness towards them while they are adjusting to the new you.

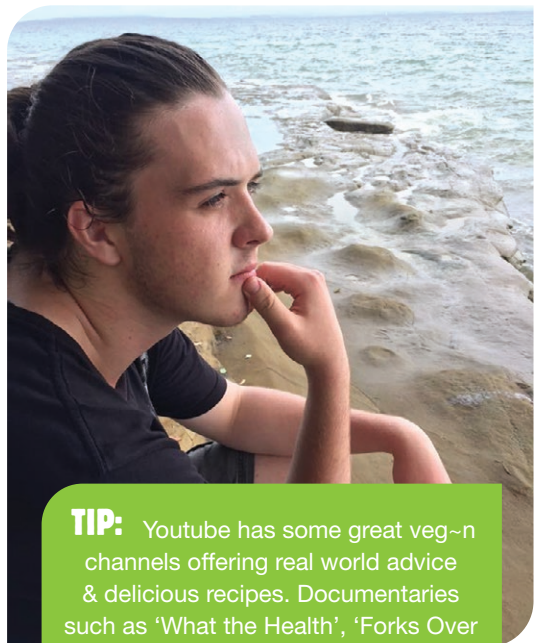
PREACHING

Try not to preach – it’s OK tell people about what you have learned, but you risk losing friends if you constantly nag them about their eating habits or if you come across as morally superior.

EATING OUT

- Many **fast food** places have veg~n options, like Burger Fuel, Hell, Pita Pit or Subway
- **Ethnic restaurants** such as Italian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Thai, and Indian restaurants all offer a variety of veg~n dishes. There are also fully vegetarian and vegan restaurants. Even restaurants that do not offer veg~n meals can usually whip up a meatless dish if you ask. Visit their website before you go, or download the Happy Cow app!
- **Airlines** offer vegetarian/vegan meals if you order in advance
- Summer **barbeques** are a cinch with veg~n sausages and patties. Buy ready-made or make your own. A trick for handling a shared grill is to wrap your items in pre-oiled tin foil and simply cook them in the foil on the grill. Use a separate fork to turn them
- When you are **invited** to someone’s house, offer to bring a veg~n main dish – make it easy for them to host you

We have people in our office and on our Facebook page who are ready to support you and help you with your choice. Remember your choice is helping to create a kinder, healthier world.



TIP: Youtube has some great veg~n channels offering real world advice & delicious recipes. Documentaries such as ‘What the Health’, ‘Forks Over Knives’ or ‘Cowspiracy’ can educate you about veg~n issues.



"It takes nothing away from a human to be kind to an animal."
 Joaquin Phoenix

PARENTS

It's awesome that you are supporting your teenager in their decision. You're probably worried about his or her nutritional needs. Fear not – there is nothing more nutrient-dense than a balanced vegetarian diet!

When children choose vegetarianism, parents sometimes feel as if their child is rejecting their values. This is not the case. By going veg, your child is demonstrating compassion toward sentient beings and standing up for the environment. There's a good chance that you are one of the people who taught them responsibility - you should be very proud!

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics states that appropriately planned vegetarian (including vegan) diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate and are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including adolescence, and for athletes.¹



SOME IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS

Protein

Good food sources of protein:

- legumes (beans, peas, chickpeas, lentils...)
- wholegrains (oats, brown rice, barley, wholegrain bread, quinoa, millet...)
- nuts & seeds (almonds, walnuts, flaxseed, tahini, pumpkin seeds...)
- peanut butter
- soy products (tofu, tempeh, soy milks...)

And remember, every plant has protein in it. It all adds up!



Iron

Although iron deficiency is common among teens, vegetarians who eat a varied and well balanced diet are not at any greater risk of iron deficiency anaemia than non-vegetarians.²

A diet rich in wholegrains, legumes, nuts, seeds, dried fruits, iron-fortified cereals and green leafy vegetables provides an adequate iron intake.

Vitamin C helps increase the absorption plant based iron, so include vitamin C-rich foods such as oranges, kiwifruit, tomatoes, capsicum, and broccoli as part of the meal.

Calcium

Good sources of calcium: milk or fortified plant-milks, tofu, blackstrap molasses, beans, orange, green leafy vegetables, figs.

- Bone density is laid down in adolescence and young adulthood, so it is important to include three or more good sources of calcium in your diet every day
- Bone density is also increased by weight bearing exercise, so it's important to keep active
- Vitamin D (usually obtained from sunshine) helps the absorption of calcium

Vitamin B12

- Teenage vegetarians who eat eggs and dairy products will obtain sufficient B12 in their diet
- Vegans should take B12 supplements

TIP: Get regular blood tests to check your iron and B12 levels.

It may seem daunting to prepare unfamiliar dishes, but it doesn't have to be difficult. Get a nice cookbook from the library or find enticing recipes online.

TIP: Prepare veg chili in quantity and freeze portions, and learn a few quick ways to prepare tofu that can provide some easy high-protein, filling meals. Adding ground nuts, flaxseed and even beans to smoothies and soups can make them more satisfying and nutritious.



References

1. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2016). Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Vegetarian Diets.
2. Saunders, A.V., Craig, W.J., Baines, S.K, and Posen J. S. (2012). Iron and vegetarian diets. MJA Open. doi: 10.5694/mjao11.11494

There are more leaflets available, check out the resources on our website:
www.vegetarian.org.nz/about-us/resources/

WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

www.vegetarian.org.nz
www.vrg.org
www.pcrm.org
www.nutritionfacts.org



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