



ONCOLOGY NUTRITION

Moving Towards Vegetarianism

This booklet will guide you through the first steps towards eating a well balanced vegetarian diet.

EVALUATE AND PLAN

To prepare for this transition, take a moment to review your present diet.

What animal products are you eating now? (check all that apply)

- red meat
- poultry
- fish
- eggs
- dairy products

All vegetarians do not eat the same way. Decide on a goal that will best fit into your lifestyle.

What is your goal for vegetarian eating?

- Semi-vegetarian: includes dairy products, eggs, fish, poultry but **no red meat**.
- Pesce vegetarian: includes dairy products, fish, eggs but **no red meat and poultry**.
- Lacto-ovo vegetarian: includes dairy products and eggs but **no red meat, fish and poultry**
- Lacto vegetarian: includes dairy products but **no red meat, fish, poultry and eggs**.
- Strict vegetarian: includes only plant based foods and **no animal products**

*although this type of vegetarianism is becoming popular, it is not recognized as a type of vegetarian diet.

BEGINNING YOUR JOURNEY....

How can you include healthy vegetarian eating in your diet?

Making the move towards vegetarianism will involve shopping for and trying new foods and cooking methods. You will be most successful by making small gradual changes (over many months) that will fit into your lifestyle. Some people prefer to make the change all at once. Do what works best for you but remember that following any of the suggestions in this booklet will result in healthier eating.

STEP ONE

Reduce your portions of animal products and include more vegetables.

- Limit your serving of cooked meat, poultry or seafood to 90 grams (3 ounces) per day or roughly the size of a deck of cards.
- Make vegetables and grains the focus of your meals and animal products the side dish.
- Reduce the amount of ground meat used in recipes for sauces, chili, burritos, and casseroles by adding more chopped vegetables or textured vegetable protein.
- Use less meat or chicken and more of a variety of vegetables in a stir-fry.
- Add less animal foods in a main dish salad.
- Have a smaller amount of meat, chicken or fish in a sandwich. Include more vegetables such as bell pepper rings, cucumbers, and sprouts.
- Ask for one-half the portion of meat, chicken, or seafood at a restaurant.
- Choose smaller servings of animal product at a buffet dinner.

STEP TWO

Introduce beans and lentils into your diet. Improve favorite recipes by substituting some or all of the meat with plant-based foods.

1. Start by adding small amounts of beans or lentils into meat dishes and casseroles.
 2. Increase the proportion of beans or lentils while gradually decreasing the meat ingredients.
- Substitute cooked mashed red lentils for some of the meat in meatloaf. Add kidney beans to meat sauces, taco fillings, and burritos.
 - Stir canned beans into your favorite casserole.
 - Try canned chickpeas in a chef's salad.
 - Add twice the amount of kidney beans to a chili.
 - Add black-eyed peas into homemade soups during cooking.
 - Have lentil soup with a whole wheat bun
 - Try hummus with whole wheat pita

STEP THREE

Go meatless on occasion.

1. Try a vegetarian meal once a week. You may want to start with breakfast.
2. Gradually increase to 2-3 meatless meals per week for lunch.
3. Work towards a whole day without animal products.

BREAKFAST IDEAS

- whole wheat pancakes with fruit and yogurt
- peanut butter on a bagel with sliced banana
- hot cereal with nuts and dried fruit
- waffles topped with fresh fruit
- french toast with fruit
- omelette with salsa
- soy yogurt and fruit

LUNCH/SUPPER IDEAS

You don't need a whole new recipe with unfamiliar ingredients to eat vegetarian foods. These vegetarian meal ideas can be made with a simple addition or substitution of one or more ingredients to your favorite recipes. To complete the meal, include some whole grains, vegetables or salads.

Add one or more of the following to **a dark green leaf salad**:

- canned, drained chick peas
- cooked kidney beans
- sunflower seeds
- hard-boiled egg
- grated low fat cheese

Top the following onto **a whole-wheat pizza** shell with tomato sauce sprinkled with oregano and garlic powder:

- sliced / chopped vegetables such as tomato, artichoke, bell pepper, Spanish onion, spinach, zucchini, eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower.
- meat substitutes (tofu pepperoni)
- variety of lower fat cheeses (read the labels)

Add the following to **a baked potato**:

- grated cheese
- chili-style canned kidney beans or baked beans
- yogurt and salsa
- cottage cheese and green onions
- grated vegetables and cheese (onion, broccoli)



Add the following to **tomato-based pasta sauce**:

- diced tofu
- cooked red lentils
- variety of vegetables sprinkled with part-skim mozzarella

Add one or more of the following to **a hearty vegetable soup**:

- canned beans (chick peas, kidney beans, pinto beans)
- baked beans
- chili-style kidney beans
- variety of split peas, lentils
- diced firm tofu

Use the following fillers into **a whole wheat pita bread, bun or soft tortilla**:

- hummus with sliced tomato, green pepper and cucumber
- salsa with refried beans and sprinkled with grated low fat cheddar cheese
- veggie burger with mustard and leaf lettuce
- falafel with yogurt and fresh vegetables
- leftover stir-fried vegetables sprinkled with low fat cheese
- tofu dog with mustard and relish

TRADITIONAL VEGETARIAN CHOICES

Improve the nutritional quality of these traditional choices by using whole grain breads/crusts, and lower fat cheeses.

- macaroni and cheese
- meatless chili
- vegetable quiche
- vegetarian lasagna
- bean burrito
- baked beans
- vegetarian pizza
- hearty vegetable soup
- grilled cheese sandwich

SNACK SUGGESTIONS

- yogurt with either chopped fresh fruit, dried fruit, or frozen berries
- popcorn
- spicy mixed nuts
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- nut butter on rice cakes
- trailmix
- bean dip with crackers
- fruit shakes
- pretzels
- muffin with cheese
- baked low-fat tortilla chips with salsa
- dried fruit
- soy yogurt
- fresh fruit
- vegetables and dip

QUESTIONS

1. How can I make sure I'm getting enough protein as a vegetarian?

As long as you are eating a varied diet with sufficient calories, you will likely not have difficulty meeting your protein needs. You do not need to combine specific foods at each meal to obtain adequate protein in your diet. Choose at least two servings of iron and protein foods from the Vegetarian Food Guide everyday. Beans, peas, lentils, tofu, soy milk, nuts and seeds, and a variety of grain products will all add protein to your diet.

2. How do I know my diet is healthy?

Start by asking yourself these 3 questions:

- Am I including a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes in my diet?
- Am I having at least 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day?
- Do I eat mostly whole grains (6-11 servings) in the day?

If you answered yes to these questions, you are well on your way to eating a healthy diet.

Tip: Limit large amounts of nuts, oils, high fat dairy products, snacks, baked goods and sweets as these foods can add a lot of fat and empty calories to your diet.

3. Is soy beverage a good substitute for cow's milk?

Soy beverage can be used as a substitute for cow's milk, if it is fortified with calcium and other important nutrients such as Vitamin D. (Choose a brand that is lower in fat content). Refer to the Vegetarian Food Guide for other sources of calcium rich foods and serving sizes if you omit dairy products from your diet.

4. Should I be concerned about iron in my diet?

A low intake of iron can lead to anemia. Meat contains iron that is easily absorbed in the body. A variety of plant foods are also good sources of iron but need help to be better absorbed.

Tip: Include plenty of Vitamin C rich foods in your diet to help absorb the iron from plant foods. Drink tea and coffee separately from meals as they can decrease the absorption of iron from plant foods.

Good Sources of Iron

Pumpkin seeds (1/2 cup)	Split pea soup (1 cup)
Sesame seeds (1/2 cup)	Blackstrap Molasses (1Tbsp)
Sunflower seeds (1/2 cup)	Wheat Germ (1 Tbsp)
Kidney Beans (1 cup)	Eggs (2)
Chick peas (1 cup)	Fortified whole grain bread and pasta
Lentils (1 cup)	Dried Fruit

5. Are there any other nutrients that can be lacking in a vegetarian diet?

Vitamin B-12 is a nutrient that is only found in animal products and a lack of it can result in anemia. If you're not eating meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or dairy products, you will need to obtain this nutrient from fortified products such as fortified soy milk or from a supplement. Sprinkle a teaspoon of Red Star™ nutritional yeast on popcorn as a good source of Vitamin B12 (available in health food stores).

6. Do I need to buy organic foods?

Organic foods are grown with little or no pesticides. However, organically grown foods are often more expensive, sometimes more difficult to find, and not necessarily more nutritious. If you wash regular supermarket produce before eating, and remove skins and outer leaves, your exposure to pesticide residues will be reduced.

VEGETARIAN EATING AROUND THE GLOBE

Vegetarian eating is enjoyed throughout the world. Be adventurous and check out the ethnic food section of your local grocery store or ethnic restaurant in your neighborhood.

Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Spanakopita (spinach and cheese pie) ◆ Tzatziki with pita bread
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dhal and chapatis ◆ Vegetable curry dishes ◆
Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hummus and pita bread ◆ Falafel sandwich ◆ Tabouli ◆ Ful (brown bean casserole)
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bean burrito ◆ Vegetable quesadilla
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minestrone soup ◆ Vegetable risotto ◆ Pasta primavera ◆ Eggplant parmesan
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Split pea soup with a roll ◆ Vegetable quiche ◆ Ratatouille
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tofu and stir-fried vegetables over rice ◆ Egg foo yung ◆ Chili eggplant

COOKBOOKS FOR VEGETARIAN FOOD IDEAS

(all of these books are available through the Vancouver Public Library)

- Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home: Fast and Easy Recipes for Anyday.
- The Moosewood Collection, Simon and Schuster 1994.
- Simple, Lowfat and Vegetarian. Suzanne Havala, Vegetarian Resource Group, 1994
- Vegetarian Delights. Judy Ridgway, Piatkus 1992
- Meatless Meals for Working People: Quick and Easy Vegetarian Recipes. Debra Wasserman and Charles Stahler, The Vegetarian Resource Group 1991
- The Complete Vegetarian Cookbook. Anne Marshall, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc 1993
- New Vegetarian Cuisine. Linda Rosensweig, Rodale Press 1994
- All Anne Lindsay cookbooks have a meatless entrée section and other vegetarian recipes.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- World Guide to Vegetarianism
<http://catless.ncl.ac.uk/veg/Guide/>
(a listing of vegetarian organizations, services, restaurants specific to country, state, city)
- Vegetarian Resource Group
www.vrg.org
- North American Vegetarian Society
<http://www.cyberveg.org/navs>
- **Dial-a-Dietitian**
Nutrition Information of B.C.
Tel: 732-9191

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This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety.