

A well planned vegetarian diet can help to achieve your nutritional requirements in a healthy way.

Chris Morris*

Department of Pharmacy, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Accepted on October 20, 2021

Introduction

Vegetarian diets are becoming increasingly popular. The benefits of eating a vegetarian diet are numerous, but they include reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain malignancies. However, some vegetarians eat too many processed meals that are heavy in calories, sugar, fat, and sodium. They may also be missing out on nutrients by not eating enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and calcium-rich foods. The aim is to be aware of your nutritional requirements so that you can create a diet that satisfies [1].

Vegetarian diets available in a variety of flavours.

When people consider a vegetarian diet, they typically consider one that excludes meat, poultry, and fish. Vegetarian diets, on the opposite hand, differ in what foods they include and exclude:

Lacto-vegetarian diets are devoid of meat, fish, poultry, and eggs, as well as items containing these ingredients.

Ovo-vegetarian diets allow eggs but prohibit meat, poultry, fish, and dairy products.

Lacto-ovo vegetarian diets include dairy and eggs but prohibit meat, fish, and fowl.

Pescatarian diets don't include meat, poultry, dairy, or eggs, but they do include fish.

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However, vegetarian diets differ in terms of what they include. Choose a range of healthy plant-based foods, such as whole fruits and vegetables, legumes and nuts, and whole grains, to get the most out of a vegetarian diet [2].

To make certain that your diet includes everything your body needs, pay special attention to the subsequent nutrients:

Calcium and vitamin D

Calcium is found in the largest amounts in milk and dairy products. Other calcium-enriched and fortified options include juices, cereals, soy milk, soy yoghurt, and tofu. Cow's milk, some kinds of soy and rice milk, and some cereals and margarines all contain vitamin D. You may require a vitamin D supplement if you do not eat enough fortified foods and obtain little sun exposure.

Vitamin B-12

Vitamin B-12 is required for the production of red blood cells and the prevention of anaemia. Because this vitamin is nearly solely found in animal products, getting adequate B-12 on a

vegan diet could be difficult. People who eat a vegan diet may go unnoticed for vitamin B-12 deficiency. This is because the vegan diet is high in folate, a nutrient that can disguise vitamin B-12 deficiency until serious issues arise. As a result, vegans should believe vitamin supplements, vitamin-enriched cereals, and fortified soy products [3].

Protein

Eggs and dairy products are terrific sources of protein, and you don't need to consume a lot of them to get enough. Plant-based foods can also provide enough protein if you eat a variety of them throughout the day.

Iron and zinc

Red blood cells require iron to function properly. Iron is often found in dry beans and peas, lentils, enriched cereals, whole-grain goods, dark leafy green vegetables, and edible fruit. Because plant-based iron isn't as easily absorbed as animal-based iron, the recommended iron consumption for vegetarians is nearly double that of non-vegetarians. Eat vitamin C-rich foods like strawberries, citrus fruits, tomatoes, cabbage, and broccoli at an equivalent time as iron-containing foods to help your body absorb iron.

Zinc, iron is more easily absorbed from animal products than from plant sources. If you eat dairy products, cheese is a good choice. Whole grains, soy products, legumes, nuts, and nutriment are all good sources of zinc in plants. Zinc may be a necessary component of various enzymes and is involved in cellular division and protein production [4].

Iodine

Thyroid hormones, which assist control metabolism, growth, and function of vital organs, contain iodine. Vegans may not obtain enough iodine, leading to an increased risk of iodine deficiency and perhaps goitre. Furthermore, foods including soybeans, cruciferous vegetables, and sweet potatoes may contribute to the development of goitre. A quarter teaspoon of iodized salt each day, on the other hand, supplies a large amount of iodine [5].

References

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Citation: Chris Morris. *A well planned vegetarian diet can help to achieve your nutritional requirements in a healthy way.* *J Pub Health Nutri. J Pub Health Nutri.* 2021; 4(10):368-369.

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***Correspondence to:**

Chris Morris

Department of Pharmacy

University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

E-mail: morris@gmail.com