



# Vegetarian *Variety*



Vegetarian diets can be healthy, nutritious and easy to prepare if they are well planned. A Registered Dietitian can be a great resource in helping you plan a healthy vegetarian eating plan.

## Do You Know Your Veggie Facts?

**Vegetarians** – Do not eat foods of animal origin.

**Lacto Ovo Vegetarians** – Eat milk & eggs but not red meat, seafood or poultry.

**Semi-Vegetarians** – Eat milk, eggs, poultry & seafood, but not red meat.

**Vegans** – Eat only plant foods and avoid using products like silk, wool, honey and other animal products.



## Make the Most of Your Vegetarian Diet

### Protein

Sources include lentils, peas, beans, nuts, tofu and cereals. The key is to eat a variety of these foods throughout the day to meet your needs.

### Zinc

Whole grains, legumes and nuts are good plant sources. Lacto ovos can get zinc from dairy products.

### Iron

Rich vegetarian foods include spinach, lentils, dried beans, dried fruits and nuts, bulgur and prune juice. Eat Vitamin C rich foods, such as citrus fruits with these foods to help your body to absorb all the iron.

### Vitamin B12

It's hard to find in a vegetarian diet because it comes mostly from animal sources. 2-3 servings of low-fat dairy products should do the trick for lacto ovo vegetarians. Others, consider eating fortified cereals or a plant-based vegetarian supplement.

### Calcium

Consume 3 servings of calcium-fortified orange juice, calcium fortified tofu, calcium-fortified soy milk, broccoli, bok choy, kale, or turnip greens. If you eat dairy, choose 3 servings of low-fat dairy products per day to help meet your calcium needs.

## Tips to Eat a Healthy Vegetarian Diet

- Include at least 2-3 servings of lentils/dried beans or peas per day in your diet. These foods are rich in iron and other nutrients.
- Eat Vitamin C rich foods and iron rich foods together to increase absorption of iron.
- Substitute butter or cream cheese spreads with nut butters or bean dips.
- Add beans to your salad to pump up the protein and sprinkle some nuts on top for extra crunch and nutrition.
- Be sure to drink 3 servings of calcium-fortified soy milk/soy yogurt/soy cheese/orange juice per day to meet your calcium requirements.
- Remember to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and legumes to get optimal nutrition.
- Try something new — many ethnic cuisines have wonderful vegetarian/vegan recipes that are nutritionally balanced.
- Watch portion size when you snack on nuts and dried fruit.

