

going veggie...

for health and wellbeing





Everyone's talking about meat reduction, so more and more people are curious about the difference a vegetarian diet might make to their vitality and wellbeing.

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Going vegetarian reduces your carbon footprint and saves animals, but it can also be better for your own health and wellbeing.

Many health conscious people go veggie to improve their diet. Others find that cutting out meat helps with specific health problems.

Whatever your reasons, switching to a vegetarian diet can give your health a boost. A vegetarian diet can be a refreshing change, a tasty option and can bring some medically proven benefits too.

This leaflet explains why.

Are vegetarians healthy?

Studies show that vegetarians are less likely than meat eaters to suffer from type 2 diabetes, heart disease, many cancers and some other medical conditions. Vegetarians are also less likely to be obese and tend to have a lower average body mass index (BMI).

The largest study ever conducted in the UK comparing rates of heart disease between vegetarians and non-vegetarians found in January 2013 that vegetarianism can reduce the risk of heart disease by up to a third. The World Cancer Research Fund, meanwhile, describes meat eating as a 'convincing' risk for colon cancer.

Fruit and vegetables

Fresh, frozen, juiced, canned or dried fruit and vegetables, for vitamins, minerals & fibre.

5
or more
portions
a day

Alternatives to meat and fish, including eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Include a variety of pulses, nuts, seeds, eggs, soya, Quorn™ & other proteins like wheat in the diet to ensure adequate intakes of protein, minerals and vitamins.

2-3
portions
a day



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A balanced vegetarian diet is one of the easiest ways to follow official healthy eating guidelines, with five portions of fruit and veg a day, plenty of complex carbohydrates and antioxidants, as well as lower saturated fat and cholesterol. A balanced vegetarian diet tends to be lower in calories and higher in fibre so can also help maintain a healthy weight.

5
portions
a day

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

Make these starchy foods the basis of most meals. Try to include wholemeal or wholegrain versions when possible and avoid adding too much fat. These supply carbohydrates, fibre, protein and some vitamins and minerals.

2-3
portions
a day

Milk, dairy and alternatives

Good sources of calcium, protein and some vitamins. If you don't eat dairy foods, choose fortified soya, rice, or oat drinks or make sure you eat other foods high in calcium.

0-3
portions
a day

Food and drink high in fat and/or sugar

Although you need some fat, eat these foods sparingly and look out for low fat alternatives.

lower fat and higher fibre



extra lean
minced beef
has over four
times the fat
of pulses

Cutting out meat can markedly reduce your intake of fat, especially saturates. Even extra lean minced beef has over four times the fat of pulses. Making your Bolognese or curry with Quorn™ or soya mince will reduce the fat by three quarters.



a balanced
vegetarian diet
has up to twice
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as the national
average

Soluble fibre can help keep cholesterol under control and a balanced vegetarian diet has up to twice as much fibre as the national average. Soya foods and nuts have been shown to be especially helpful in keeping cholesterol down so if yours is high then a balanced vegetarian diet may help. The same foods, rich in plant proteins and slowly absorbed carbohydrates with a low glycaemic index (GI), can be beneficial in avoiding and managing type 2 diabetes.





healthy balance

Obviously one can eat unhealthily as a vegetarian but if you swap meat for more pulses, wholegrains, nuts, fruit and vegetables you will be changing your eating habits for the better.

Focussing on fresh, unrefined and unprocessed foods will help you gain all of the potential benefits of a meat-free lifestyle. Low fat, high fibre sources of protein such as pulses, tofu and Quorn™ will help keep your digestive system healthy.

Leafy green vegetables, nuts and seeds are good sources of iron, calcium, zinc and essential fatty acids. Eating a range of different coloured fruit and vegetables provides antioxidant vitamins and other helpful compounds that guard against cell damage.

Many people imagine that meat is essential to a balanced diet but that is simply untrue. A vegetarian diet can easily provide enough protein, iron and other nutrients for any stage of life.

People choose to go vegetarian for many different reasons and lots of other life choices contribute to good health, but a well planned vegetarian diet really can make you feel better inside and out.

going veggie...

more information

For more information on vegetarian nutrition, visit **www.vegsoc.org/health**

Get all the support you need to change your diet for the better at **www.vegsoc.org/goingveggie** or by ordering a copy of 'Going Veggie', the Vegetarian Society's guide to going, and staying, vegetarian.

For more information on every aspect of vegetarianism, including delicious meat-free recipes and details on the benefits of joining the Vegetarian Society, **visit www.vegsoc.org**

All of our resources are free. If you have found this leaflet useful, please consider making a donation to help them stay that way.

www.vegsoc.org

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References for the information in this booklet are available at **www.vegsoc.org/references**

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