

LESSON 4: NO BEEF, NO PORK, NO POULTRY, NO PROBLEM

Eating a healthy vegetarian diet is not as easy as removing meat from your plate. You have to take steps to ensure you are meeting your daily nutritional needs. The challenge is to obtain sufficient amounts of protein, iron, vitamin B12, zinc, vitamin D and calcium.

A healthy vegetarian diet consists mainly of plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. There are many benefits to eating a healthy vegetarian diet such as a diet lower in fat and cholesterol and rich in fiber.

The four types of vegetarians are:

- **LACTO-VEGETARIAN** – one who eats dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yogurt, as well as plant-based foods, but does not eat meat, poultry, fish or eggs
- **LACTO-OVO-VEGETARIAN** – one who eats eggs, dairy products and plant-based foods, but does not eat meat, poultry or fish
- **VEGAN** – one who eats only plant-based foods
- **PARTIAL OR SEMI-VEGETARIAN** – one who eats plant-based foods, dairy products, eggs and small selections of poultry or fish, but no beef or pork

In order to maintain a healthy vegetarian diet, one should follow a Vegetarian Diet Pyramid.



ALTERNATIVES FOR EGGS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:



MILK: soymilk, rice milk or almond milk rather than cow's milk

BUTTER: olive oil, vegetable broth or nonfat cooking spray when sautéing foods; canola oil when baking foods

CHEESE: soy cheese

EGGS: commercial egg replacements or tofu

A vegetarian must include sufficient amounts of various nutrients. A vegan diet eliminates food sources that are rich in vitamin B12 and calcium. You can get essential nutrients from non-meat sources in a variety of ways:

PROTEIN: Vegetarians who eat eggs or dairy products have diets rich in protein. Other sources of protein include soy products, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

CALCIUM: Low-fat dairy products and dark green vegetables such as spinach, turnip greens and broccoli are great sources of calcium. Tofu, soymilk and fruit juices may contain enriched calcium.

VITAMIN B12: This vitamin is found primarily in animal products including milk, eggs and cheese. Some cereals and soy products are enriched with vitamin B12. An additional option is to take vitamin B12 supplements daily.

IRON: Dried beans, peas, enriched cereals, whole-grains, dark, leafy green vegetables and dried fruits contain iron.

ZINC: Whole grains, soy products and nuts are excellent sources of zinc.

FAT: Nuts, vegetable oils and avocados are healthy sources of fat.