

# Veggie Guide to GOOD NUTRITION

More and more people today are deciding to give up eating meat. Usually this is because they think it is morally wrong to kill animals for food. Others choose to go vegetarian or vegan for health reasons.



## Introduction

Everyone, whether they are veggie or not, needs to ensure that they eat a balanced diet and a wide variety of different foods to get all the protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins and minerals their body needs. The good news is that a balanced and varied vegetarian diet

contains everything the body requires to stay fit and healthy. You won't lack anything by not eating meat. In fact, studies which compared the health of vegetarians and meat-eaters have shown that, on the whole, vegetarians are healthier than people who eat a lot of meat. This is because they tend to

eat more foods that are high in vitamins and fibre. Vegetarians have lower rates of cancer and heart disease, and this is probably because their diet is lower in fat and higher in fibre, fresh fruit and vegetables.

## Good Source Guide

### Vitamins

#### VITAMIN B12

*Helps maintain healthy blood and nerve function*

Lots of foods are now fortified with B12, for example, yeast extract such as Marmite, soya milks, non-dairy margarines and some breakfast cereals.

#### VITAMIN C

*For fighting infections*

All sorts of fruits and vegetables, especially citrus fruits (oranges and lemons), kiwi fruits, blackcurrants, green vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli and cabbage), and green peppers.

#### VITAMIN D

*Helps your body absorb calcium and to form healthy bones*

Most people obtain all the vitamin D they need from sunlight on their skin. Fortified foods are a good source of vitamin D, especially margarines, soya milk and some breakfast cereals.

### Minerals

#### IRON

*For healthy blood*

Vegetarians get plenty of iron from their diet. Green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli and cabbage), wholemeal bread, pulses (such as beans and lentils), pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds are all good sources. Vitamin C helps us to absorb iron from food.

#### CALCIUM

*For healthy teeth and bones*

Good sources include green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli and cabbage), bread, pulses (such as beans and lentils), dried fruit, nuts and sesame seeds. Many soya milks are also fortified with calcium.

#### ZINC

*For healthy skin*

Good sources include wholemeal bread, brown rice, lentils, pumpkin and sesame seeds, nuts and mushrooms.

### Protein

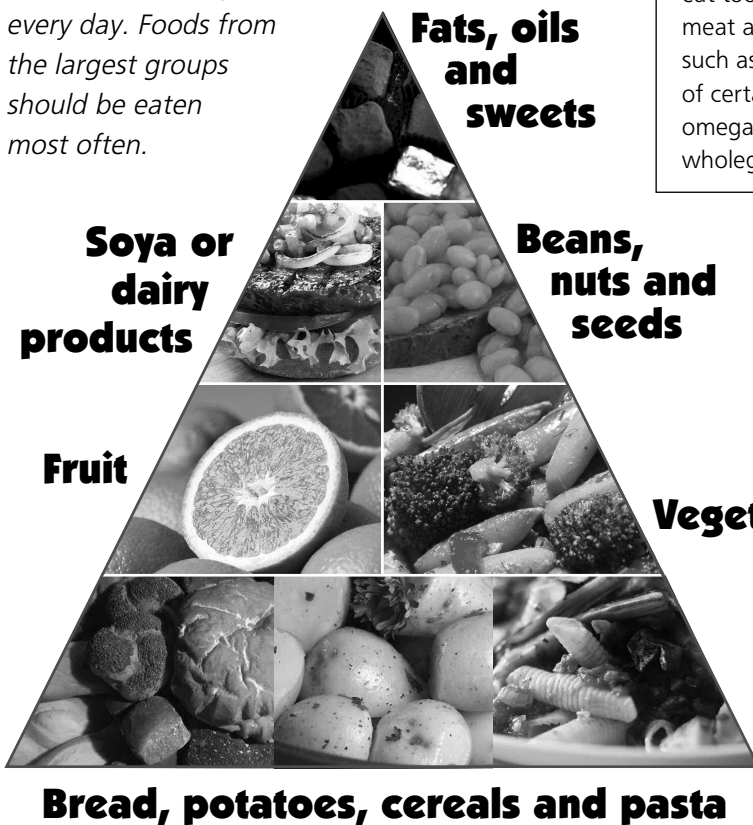
*For growth and development*

The vegetarian diet easily supplies all the protein that you need. Good sources include soya foods such as veggie burgers, veggie sausages, veggie mince and tofu, as well as peas, nuts, seeds, wholegrain cereal foods (including bread, pasta and porridge) and brown rice. Pulses such as beans and lentils are excellent sources of protein. Interestingly, a standard beef burger contains 10.2g of protein, and half a can of baked beans contains 11.5g of protein - 1.3g more!



# FOOD PYRAMID

To ensure you get all the nutrients your body needs, you should eat some from each of the food groups every day. Foods from the largest groups should be eaten most often.



## Fats, oils and sweets

We need to eat some fat to give us energy and to help our bodies absorb certain vitamins. However, eating too much fat and sugar in foods such as crisps, cakes and biscuits is unhealthy. Most people also eat too many foods that are high in unhealthy saturated fats, such as meat and dairy products. It is better to eat unsaturated vegetable oils such as rapeseed, sunflower or olive oil. We also need small amounts of certain 'essential' fats'. These are found in foods like flaxseed oil (for omega 3), vegetable oils, walnuts, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds, wholegrain foods and soya products (for omega 6).

## Soya or dairy products

Lots of people, when they first become vegetarian, tend to rely too much on dairy products and eggs which are high in unhealthy saturated fats. Soya products such as soya beans, TVP (soya chunks or mince), soya burgers, tofu and soya milk are a good alternative.

## Beans, nuts & seeds

There are many types of beans, pulses and nuts - so it shouldn't be too hard to try to eat some every day. Add them to soups, pasta sauces and curries. Beans are an excellent source of certain proteins and iron. Nuts and seeds are rich in protein and in essential fats.

## Breads, cereals, rice and pasta

These bulky carbohydrates are very important and we need lots of foods like bread, potatoes, pasta, breakfast cereals, noodles and rice. They should make up about a third of all the food you eat and provide the bulk of your calories. The foods in this group provide energy and dietary fibre along with vitamins, minerals and small amounts of protein. Choosing wholegrain varieties such as wholemeal bread, brown rice and wholegrain breakfast cereal will help to keep your digestive system and heart healthy.

## Fruit and Vegetables

Fruit and veg should make up at least a third of the food you eat, so aim for at least five portions of each every day. Try to have some at every meal, or as snacks between meals. Eat a variety of different fruits and vegetables, preferably fresh. These foods supply the protective vitamins, minerals and fibre which are essential for good health. You don't have to boil vegetables to a pulp! Try them raw, chopped up small in salads, steamed, baked, roasted, stir-fried and mixed into main meal dishes such as curries, casseroles, stews and soups. Try to eat some dark green leafy vegetables at least every other day.

## Your good health

**A**ll this talk about nutrients, vitamins and proteins can be confusing, but being vegetarian is really very easy. There are lots of

ready-made veggie foods in the shops, such as the Linda McCartney range. And there are loads of familiar recipes and meals that can be adapted into veggie ones - like pizza, curry, casserole, chilli, spaghetti bolognese, shepherd's pie, pasta, stir-fries, risotto, pasties, sausage rolls and burgers. Experiment and try some new foods. You'll find vegetarian food is so much more interesting and tasty than boring old meat!

*Vegetarianism is based on compassion and a belief that humans should not shed the blood of sensitive creatures for food that we do not need.*



## ACTION

- See our website for more info on vegetarianism or write to us for a copy of our free *Young Veggies* booklet.
- If you're not veggie, why not give it a try for a week? You could be sponsored and raise money for Animal Aid. Write to us for a sponsor form and some easy veggie recipes.

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