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## Meatless Meals

This 192-page book contains over 100 quick and easy recipes and tells you how to be a vegetarian within your hectic schedule using common, convenient foods. Includes information on fast food restaurants. (\$12)



## Simply Vegan

This excellent resource contains 160 quick and easy vegan recipes and an extensive vegan nutrition section by Reed Mangels, Ph.D., R.D., covering topics such as protein, fat, calcium, iron, vitamin B12, Pregnancy and the Vegan Diet, Feeding Vegan Kids, and a nutrition glossary. Also featured are sample menus and meal plans. An additional section on shopping by mail or online tells you where to find vegan clothes and shoes, cosmetics, household items, etc. (\$15)



## Vegan Meals for One or Two

Whether you live alone, are a couple, or are the only one in your household that is vegan, this 216-page book is for you. Information on meal planning and shopping, as well as breakfast ideas, one-pot wonders, and more included. (\$15)



## Vegetarian Journal

Student Membership Only \$10.00 Per Year

Send check to Vegetarian Resource Group,  
Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203  
or call 410-366-8343.

Visit our website at [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)

## Join The Vegetarian Resource Group

RECEIVE THE QUARTERLY VEGETARIAN JOURNAL CONTAINING VEGAN RECIPES. Send \$10 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Vegetarian Nutrition for Teenagers



By Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



**More and more teenagers** are choosing not to eat meat, poultry, or fish. They are becoming vegetarians. Teenage vegetarians are often faced with pressures – pressures from peers to conform, pressures from parents concerned about their health, and pressures from within to continue on the path they have chosen.

## Variety is the Key to a Healthy Vegetarian Diet

Probably the most frequent questions for teenage vegetarians are about the nutritional adequacy of their food choices. A vegetarian diet can be enjoyed by people of all ages. The key to a healthy vegetarian diet is variety. Just as your parents should be concerned if you only eat hamburgers, they should also worry if you only eat potato chips and salad.

A healthy and varied vegetarian diet includes vegetables, fruits, plenty of leafy greens, whole grain products, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Some vegetarians choose to eat dairy products and/or eggs, while vegans do not eat these foods.

Teenage vegetarians have nutritional requirements that are the same as other teens. The teen years are times of especially rapid growth and change with high nutritional needs. The nutrients that you will probably be asked about the most are protein, calcium, vitamin D, iron, and vitamin B12.

## What About Protein?

North American vegetarian teens eating varied diets rarely have any difficulty obtaining enough protein as long as their diet contains enough energy (calories) to support growth. Cow's milk and lowfat cheese are protein sources; however, beans, breads, cereals, nuts, peanut butter, tofu, and soymilk are also some foods that are especially good sources of protein. Only fruits, fats, sugars, and alcohol do not provide much protein; so a diet based only on these foods would have a good chance of being too low in protein.

It is not necessary to plan combinations of foods to obtain enough protein or amino acids (components of protein). A mixture of plant proteins eaten throughout the day will provide enough essential amino acids.



## Other Important Nutrients for Vegetarian Teens

**Calcium and vitamin D** are needed to build bones. Bone density is determined in adolescence and young adulthood; so it is important to include good sources of calcium in your diet every day. Cow's milk and dairy products do contain calcium. However, there are other good sources of calcium such as tofu made with calcium sulfate (read the label), tahini (sesame butter), green leafy vegetables including collard greens, mustard greens, and kale, and calcium-fortified soymilk and orange juice. Soymilk and orange juice are often fortified with vitamin D also.

**Iron** requirements of teenagers are relatively high. By eating a varied diet, a vegetarian can meet iron needs while avoiding the excess fat and cholesterol found in red meats such as beef or pork. To increase the amount of iron absorbed from a meal, eat a food containing vitamin C as part of the meal. Citrus fruits and juices (for example, orange juice), tomatoes, and broccoli are all good sources of vitamin C. Foods which are high in iron include tofu, spinach, black-eyed peas, chickpeas, pinto beans, potatoes, cashews, and watermelon.

**Vitamin B12** is a vitamin which only vegans (vegetarians eating no dairy, eggs, meat, fish, and birds) need to add to their diet. Some cereals and fortified soymilks have vitamin B12 (check the label). Red Star T6635 nutritional yeast flakes (Vegetarian Support Formula) also supply vitamin B12.



## Healthy Steps to Your Ideal Weight

Many teenagers are concerned about losing or gaining weight. To lose weight, look at your diet. If you are eating a lot of sweets or fatty foods, replace them with fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes. If your diet already seems healthy, try to get more exercise – walking, running, or swimming daily, for example.

If you are trying to gain weight, you will need to eat more food. Perhaps eating more often or eating food somewhat higher in calories and lower in bulk will help. Try to eat three or more times a day whether you are trying to gain or lose weight. It is hard to obtain all of the nutritious foods you need if you eat only one meal a day.

If you feel that you cannot control your eating behavior or if you are losing a great deal of weight, you should talk with your health care provider.



## Quick Snacks for Busy People

With the demands of school and outside activities, it may often seem there is just not enough time to eat. Here are some foods that require little or no preparation. Some of these foods can be found in fast food restaurants – check the menu.

*Apples, bananas, grapes, bagels and peanut butter, bean burritos, veggie burgers, baked potato, cereal, carrot and celery sticks, dried fruits, popcorn, nuts, pretzels, trail mix, pizza, pasta, soymilk, soup, fruit shakes, frozen juice bars...*



## The Vegetarian Resource Group

The Vegetarian Resource Group is a non-profit organization which makes it easier to be vegetarian or vegan. The contents of this handout and our other publications are not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.



## A Vegetarian Diet Benefits Your Health, the Environment, and Animals Too!

**Some Famous Vegetarians** – Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Paul McCartney, Alyssa Milano, Moby, Jennie Garth, Prince, Alicia Silverstone, Joaquin Phoenix, Natalie Portman, Gwyneth Paltrow, Tobey Maguire, and Shania Twain to name a few.

## Resources Available from The Vegetarian Resource Group

Tabling and classroom materials: Vegan Diets in a Nutshell, Vegetarianism in a Nutshell, Spanish brochures, Vegetarian Nutrition for Teenagers, I Love Animals and Broccoli Coloring Books, and more. Call The Vegetarian Resource Group at (410) 366-8343 or e-mail [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org).

## Annual Essay Contest

Enter a 2-3 page essay on any aspect of vegetarianism! Must be postmarked by May 1 for each current year. A \$50 savings bond will be awarded to winners. Write for details.

## [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)

Be sure to check out our web site at [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org). You'll find nutrition information and vegetarian meal plans, fantastic recipes, a guide to over 2,000 vegetarian restaurants across the country, and much more. You can also join The Vegetarian Resource Group and order vegetarian books off our web site. Parents of vegetarians can join their own e-mail list.