

Why Vegan?

Vegan Diet—What is it?

It's vegetarian, but goes further. No animal products at all: no meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products or honey. For many people, this is not only a way of eating, but also a principled way of living which puts into practice a philosophy of reverence for all life.

To focus on what they do rather than don't eat: vegans eat from the New Four Food Groups: grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits. There is growing evidence and support for a vegan diet that also excludes bottled oil, refined grains and sweeteners and other processed foods—i.e. a whole food plant-based (WFPB) diet. However, some of us think that occasional moderate use of vegan processed foods is fine, if you eat mostly whole plant foods.

Is a Vegan Diet Healthy?

The mainstream authorities on nutrition in the US agree that a vegan diet is adequate and healthy. The 2015 US Department of Agriculture/Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines state clearly that a vegan diet is a healthy option.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (used to be called the American Dietetic Association), another mainstream group, recently released a position paper on vegetarian diets stating that a completely plant-based diet is adequate for human health, and furthermore that “Vegetarians and vegans are at reduced risk of certain health conditions, including ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, certain types of cancer, and obesity.” Those are the diseases that kill most Americans.

Some recent studies indicate that a vegan diet can perform the near-miraculous feat of not only preventing, but also reversing some chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and early-stage prostate cancer.

Diabetes: <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/29/8/1777>

Heart disease: http://dresselstyn.com/JFP_06307_Article1.pdf

Prostate CA: https://www.ornish.com/wp-content/uploads/Intensive_Lifestyle_Changes_and_Prostate_Cancer.pdf

Do I Need to Take Supplements?

If you follow a completely vegan diet, you should take regular B12 supplements (either a small dose frequently, or a large dose once or twice a week; you can't overdose). You should get a regular source of omega-3 fatty acids such as ground flax seed (this is not really a supplement, but a whole food). Everyone in our climate, not just vegans, should consider taking a vitamin D supplement (D2 is the vegan variety but there is a vegan version of D3 available—both work). We don't recommend any other supplements, not even a multi-vitamin. The handout on supplements in the Plant-Based Diet materials (see below) explains why the need for these few supplements is not inconsistent with a vegan diet being optimal for health.

Does a Vegan Diet Taste Good and Will I be Satisfied?

If you move towards or adopt a vegan diet, you will discover for yourself how delicious it can be. Here are some practical suggestions:

—Discover the natural food stores (Abundance, Lori's, Hart's) and Nature's Marketplace in Wegmans. Discover Kitchen Verde, a vegan meal prep and delivery service, kitchen-verde.com, and our vegan restaurants, Natural Oasis at 288 Monroe Ave. and The Red Fern at 283 Oxford St. (intersection with Park Ave.)

—Watch these videos: “Forks Over Knives,” “Fed Up,” “Vegucated,” “Cowspiracy,” “PlantPure Nation,” and “Eating You Alive.” Tribe of Heart, a creative team based in Ithaca, just launched the platform Global Tribal Cinema where you can watch their films “The Witness” and “Peaceable Kingdom,” for free and in several languages, and you can access a wealth of other information and inspiration. Go to: http://www.tribeofheart.org/sr/home_english.htm And please watch this short film (just 12 minutes): “A Life Connected”: <http://www.veganvideo.org> and “Why Vegan?” <http://evolvecampaigns.org.uk/evolve/videos.aspx#whyvegan>

—Look at the handouts from the 6-week Plant-Based Diet course offered by Rochester Lifestyle Medicine, including recipes and lists of books and resources: <https://rochesterlifestylemedicine.com/resources/nutrition-course/> You can even watch videos of the classes.

—Visit the following websites, some of which also have a presence on Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, and other social media.

Websites with recipes:

<https://chickpeamagazine.com>

<http://www.isachandra.com>

<http://keepinitkind.com>

<http://minimalistbaker.com>

<http://www.nomeatathlete.com>

<http://ohsheglows.com>

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org>

<http://www.oneingredientchef.com>

<http://plantpoweredkitchen.com>

<http://www.thugkitchen.com>

(beware obscenity)

<http://www.veganricha.com>

<http://www.veganunnereats.com>

<http://theveganzombie.com>

<http://vegweb.com>

<http://nutritionfacts.org>

(not recipes, just nutrition info)