

Vegan Diet

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A vegan diet is a way of eating that includes:

- vegetables
- fruits
- beans
- legumes
- grains.

Foods from animal sources such as meat, milk, eggs, cheese and honey are **not** eaten.

What to Consider

A vegan diet can be a healthful style of eating. However, removing a food or food group such as animal products can make it harder to get enough of certain nutrients.

For example, vitamin B12 is mainly found in animal products. People who follow a vegan diet need to eat foods with vitamin B12 added (fortified) or take a supplement. This helps make sure the body gets the B12 it needs to function well.

The following table lists nutrients that are mainly found in animal products. You may need to take a supplement if you are not able to get enough of the nutrient through the foods you eat.

Nutrient	What it Does in the Body	Vegan Food Sources
<p>Calcium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps blood vessels and muscles work well. ■ Helps release enzymes that keep your body working well. ■ Helps strengthen bones and teeth ■ Supports nerve health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ almonds and brazil nuts ■ amaranth and teff (gluten-free grains) ■ chia seeds and flaxseeds ■ cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts) ■ dark leafy greens ■ dried beans, dried peas and lentils ■ figs, oranges and black currants ■ fortified juice ■ tahini (sesame seed paste) ■ seaweed ■ soy

Iodine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps make a thyroid hormone that is important for metabolism, bone health and brain development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ iodized salt ■ lima beans ■ prunes ■ seaweed
*Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Converts food to energy. ■ Helps carry oxygen to tissues. ■ Helps your brain work well. ■ Supports the immune system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ dried beans ■ dark leafy greens
Omega-3 fatty acids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports heart, eye and brain health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ chia seeds and flaxseeds ■ marine algae supplements ■ nori seaweed ■ soy ■ walnuts
Protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps maintain bone and muscle mass. ■ Supports the immune system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ dried beans, dried peas and lentils ■ most plant foods ■ nuts and seeds ■ whole grains ■ soy
Vitamin B12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps make DNA. ■ Helps make red blood cells. ■ Supports metabolism. ■ Supports the nervous system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ foods fortified with vitamin B12
Vitamin D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Blocks the release of parathyroid, a hormone that makes bones thin and brittle. ■ Helps the body absorb calcium and phosphorus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ fortified almond milk and soy milk ■ fortified cereals ■ fortified orange juice ■ mushrooms
Zinc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps heal wounds. ■ Helps break down carbohydrates. ■ Supports the immune system. ■ Supports the sense of smell and taste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ dried beans ■ fortified cereals ■ peas ■ peanuts ■ pecans ■ wild rice

***Iron from meat, poultry and fish is easier for your body to absorb than iron from vegetables, fruit and grain. Iron from all sources are better absorbed when eaten with foods that contain vitamin C such as bell peppers, broccoli, kiwi, oranges and strawberries.**