

# Going Vegetarian

## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A VEGETARIAN?

Go for it! A vegetarian diet can be fun, healthy and a great way to discover many new and delicious foods. Just remember when you take something out of your diet to put something back. There are many nutrients you need to keep your body fit and healthy. Here are some really important ones for vegetarians.



### **PROTEIN: WILL YOU GET ENOUGH?**

That is up to you! Most teens need **60-75 grams of protein** per day. To meet your protein needs, aim for a protein-rich food source in at least 2 meals per day and 3 cups of milk, fortified soy milk or yogurt daily. Here are some ideas for **protein-rich foods** (each is around 8 grams of protein):

- Beans and Grains: try to have a half-cup of each
  - Try adzuki, black-eyed peas, black, pink, pinto or kidney beans, garbanzo or chick peas or lentils
  - Combine with a grain like barley, corn, couscous, millet, or rice
- Egg Whites: Try to limit eggs to 3 egg yolks per week
- Cheese (made from milk or soy)--Try to have no more than one or two slices per day
- Dairy or fortified soy milk or yogurt – Aim for 3 cups each day (1 cup = 8 gm protein)
- Hummus and Pita bread: about 4 tbsp. hummus with ½ a pita
- Nuts and seeds: A serving is ¼ cup , a small handful, or 2 tbsp of nut butter
- Soups like vegetarian chili, split pea, and pasta fagiole
- Soy products, like edamame, tofu, soy burgers, soy sausage and crumbles (try in pasta sauce or as a taco filling). Tofu can be enjoyed in stir-fries, marinated and baked, or mashed with seasonings as a sandwich spread.

## **VITAMIN B12**

- This B-vitamin is found in animal foods, and your brain needs it to function at its' best. Vitamin B12 gives you stamina, and helps you think fast.
- Teenagers need 2 mg a day.

If you are still eating eggs and dairy, you are getting vitamin B12. If not, you can get it from nutritional yeast, (available at health food stores).

It is the only non-animal source - Sprinkled it on popcorn, use instead of parmesan cheese on pasta, and mix into mashed potatoes, soups, or casseroles.

## **CALCIUM AND VITAMIN D:** **YOU NEED THEM FOR STRONG BONES AND TEETH!**



Teenagers need 1,300 mg of calcium a day. Even if you continue to eat dairy products, you need to make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D, and it is important to know other sources.

Think outside the carton. Here are some other good vegetarian calcium sources.

- Broccoli, kale, and swiss chard
- Almonds
- Tofu that has been processed with calcium (read the label to make sure)
- Fortified soy/rice milk or orange juice

If you don't think you will meet your calcium needs, talk to your doctor about a calcium supplement.

You can get vitamin D from being in the sunshine, or from fortified foods like calcium/vitamin D fortified dairy, rice, or soy milk, or orange juice.



## **IRON: Iron keeps your blood healthy, your energy high, and your brain functioning at its best!**

Teenagers need 15 mg a day – so aim for at least 4 iron-rich foods a day.

- Cooked legumes and soybeans
- Baked potatoes (with the skin)
- Dried fruits
- Iron-fortified cereals
- Spinach, kale, and leafy greens

Eat these foods with a source of vitamin C to help your body absorb the iron. Examples include strawberries, kiwi, tomatoes, broccoli, peppers or citrus fruit.

### **Edamame Dip:**

1 bag frozen edamame  
1 clove garlic, sliced  
1 tbsp. canola oil  
2 tsp. sesame oil  
½ tsp. salt and a dash of red pepper  
Juice of 1 lime  
2 tbsp. chopped cilantro

Boil edamame for five minutes, then drain. Meanwhile, heat the canola oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté until golden brown. Combine the beans, garlic, and remaining ingredients in a food processor until smooth. Serve with raw vegetables and crackers.

*Adapted from Cooking Light*

### **Websites to visit for more information:**

Beyond recipes and tips, this site features articles on current vegetarian topics and news.  
[www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)

You can join the Vegetarian Youth Society and keep up with vegetarian campaigns and issues. This site also has excellent recipe ideas.  
[www.veg.org](http://www.veg.org)