

Healthful Choices for Vegetarian Families

Does your family eat vegetarian style sometimes – or all the time? With smart food choices, your child can get all the nutrients he or she needs. You can do it, without much effort.



Let MyPyramid guide your food choices. There is lots of variety for vegetarians. The Meat Group has eggs, cooked dry beans, tofu, soy burgers, nuts, peanut butter, and seeds for protein.

Include foods with iron and calcium. These nutrients need special attention from everyone, including vegetarians. Your child needs enough of both to grow properly.

Offer meals with enough calories, or food energy. Vegetarian meals with lots of fiber and not much fat may fill your child up. But they may not supply enough food energy for growing, learning, and playing.

Find sources of vitamin B12 and zinc – if your family avoids all animal products. Growing kids need both! Use food labels to buy foods with vitamin B12 added: some cereals and some soy products. Whole grains, cooked dry beans, tofu, seeds, and nuts have some zinc.

Vegetarian Meals: Good Taste, Easy To Make!

Even in a hurry, you can make a vegetarian meal that's healthful and tastes good. **Try these menus!**

Menu 1	Menu 2	Menu 3
Canned vegetable soup with cubed tofu	Toasted lowfat or fat-free cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread	Spaghetti sauce mixed with canned red beans, over pasta
Whole-wheat roll	Cole slaw	Tossed green salad
Apple or banana	Lowfat or fat-free pudding	Cut up fruit
Lowfat milk	100% orange juice	Calcium-fortified soy beverage

Provided by _____

Healthful Choices for Vegetarian Families

For Vegetarians

Use Nutrition Facts on food labels to find these foods.

Foods With Calcium

- Milk*
- Yogurt*
- Cheese*
- Calcium-fortified soy beverages are nondairy choices*
- Tofu made with calcium sulfate
- 100% juice with added calcium
- Breakfast cereal with added calcium
- Cooked dry beans
- Dark-green leafy vegetables (collard, turnip greens)

* Choose mostly lowfat and fat-free products.



Foods With Iron

- Cooked dry beans, peas, and lentils
- Whole-grain and enriched breads and cereals
- Cereal with added iron
- Spinach



Vitamin C helps the body use iron. Offer iron-rich foods with vitamin C-rich foods: oranges, berries, some juices, tomatoes, broccoli, and green peppers.

Consider this:

A vitamin and mineral supplement may be a good idea, especially if your family does not eat any animal products. Ask your health care professional first.