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# Vegan\*

A vegan diet omits all animal products and by-products: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, honey, leather, fur, silk, and wool. Many vegans avoid cosmetics and soaps derived from animal products, as well as foods processed using animal products such as refined white sugar and some wines. Many vegans do not use products tested on animals.

Ethical commitment, optimal health, and moral conviction are often the main motivations for vegans. Of particular concern to many vegans are the practices involved in factory farming and animal testing, and the intensive use of land and other resources for animal farming, among multiple other environmental concerns. Spiritual and religious matters also often come into play.

The key to well-balanced nutrition on a vegan diet is variety and density. Properly planned vegan diets have been found to satisfy nutritional needs and promote numerous health benefits including a reduced risk of heart disease, colon and lung cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, obesity, and a number of other conditions.

An ideal vegan diet includes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, nuts, seeds, and legumes. A typical well-planned vegan menu might include grain porridge with fresh fruit for breakfast, a veggie stir-fry with quinoa for lunch, and a bean and vegetable soup with a leafy-green salad for dinner.

Poorly planned vegan diets can be low in vitamin B12 and other vitamins. It's important to plan meals to include a variety of nutrient-dense foods. When making the transition to a vegan way of eating, many people find it easier to start by eliminating one or two things from the diet and replacing them with healthy vegan alternatives, rather than eliminating all animal products immediately.

## **Foods to include:**

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Grains
- Beans
- Nuts and seeds
- Oils

## **Foods to avoid:**

- All animal products

## **Pros:**

- May reduce hypertension
- May initiate weight loss
- May improve energy levels

## **Cons:**

- May cause excessive weight loss
- May lead to anemia and other nutritional deficiencies
- May be difficult to dine out

## **Sources:**

*Veganism in a Nutshell* [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org) [\\_\(http://www.vrg.org\)\\_](http://www.vrg.org)

*Veganism* [www.vegan.org](http://www.vegan.org) [\\_\(http://www.vegan.org\)](http://www.vegan.org)