

# MINUS THE MEAT

VEGETARIAN MADE HEALTHY & SIMPLE

“The greatest dishes are very simple dishes.” – Virginia Woolf

Vegetarianism can be a healthy lifestyle if planned carefully. Here are some guidelines to keep it healthy and simple.

## Definitions:

### Vegan

consumes only plant foods; all animal products are eliminated, often including honey and yeast

### Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarian

consumes plant foods, dairy products, and eggs and excludes meat, poultry, and fish This is the most common type.

## Benefits:

- Typically lower in saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and protein
- Higher in fiber, vitamins and minerals, and anti-oxidants
- May lower risk of colon and breast cancers, heart disease, and high cholesterol

## Tips:

- Evaluate why you are choosing to eliminate certain products from your food options. Losing weight or restricting should not be your only reason.
- Great “replacements” for meat include soy burgers, tofu, texturized vegetable protein, lentils and beans.
- Most recipes can be made vegetarian by replacing meat with one of the above mentioned foods.
- Most restaurants should have at least one vegetarian entrée. Ask if you don’t see any on the menu. They can usually create a vegetarian meal.

## Nutrients at risk for Deficiency

### Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>

This essential vitamin is found only in animal products. Yeasts, algae and fermented soy products may contain small amounts, but may not be readily absorbed by the body. B<sub>12</sub> should be supplemented or obtained from fortified grains and cereal products.

### Iron

Eliminating meat products can decrease the amount of easily absorbed iron in the diet. In order to increase absorption, citric acid foods should be consumed with plant sources of iron such as fortified cereals, beans, and leafy greens. Citric acid is in citrus foods, tomatoes, and potatoes.

### Complete Proteins

The body needs complete proteins, found only in animal and soy products, to be able to function properly. Plant foods contain partial proteins, but can become complete when mixed with other plant proteins such as beans and rice or nuts and vegetables.

### Vitamin D

The majority of the population gets this nutrient through fortified milk products. Vegetarians who eliminate milk products may need supplementation.

### Calcium

Calcium is necessary for strong teeth and bones, as well as proper cardiac function. Vegetarians who choose to eliminate dairy products should focus on calcium containing plant foods such as green leafy vegetables, almonds, and fortified soy milk. If these sources are not enough, a supplement may be necessary.