

A Plant-Based Diet Is a Powerful Way to Achieve Good Health

A plant-based diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes, is a great way to achieve good health! These foods are full of [fiber](#), rich in vitamins and minerals, free of [cholesterol](#), and low in calories and saturated fat. Eating a variety of these foods provides all the [protein](#), [calcium](#), and other essential nutrients your body needs. It's important to include a reliable source of vitamin B12 in your diet. You can easily meet your vitamin B12 needs with a daily supplement or fortified foods, such as vitamin B12-fortified breakfast cereals, plant milks, and nutritional yeast.

Those who eat a plant-based diet lower their risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and other health conditions.

Heart Disease

People who eat a plant-based diet have a lower risk of dying from [heart disease](#) when compared to non-vegetarians. Plant-based diets have been proven to prevent and reverse heart disease, improve cholesterol, and lower blood pressure.

Diabetes

Plant-based diets prevent, manage, and reverse [type 2 diabetes](#). Plant-based diets lower body weight, improve insulin function, and increase beta-cells' ability to regulate blood sugar, which helps reverse symptoms associated with type 2 diabetes.

Weight Loss

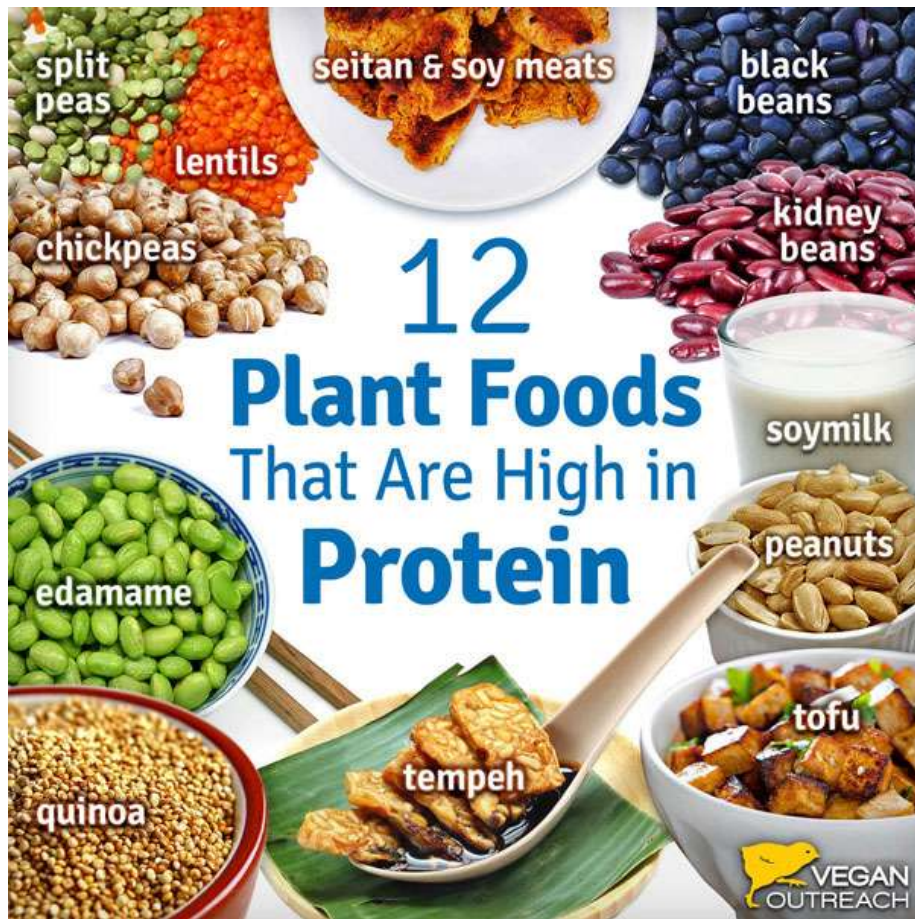
Plant-based diets lead to [weight loss](#), even without exercise or calorie counting. Replacing high-fat foods with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes naturally reduces calorie intake.

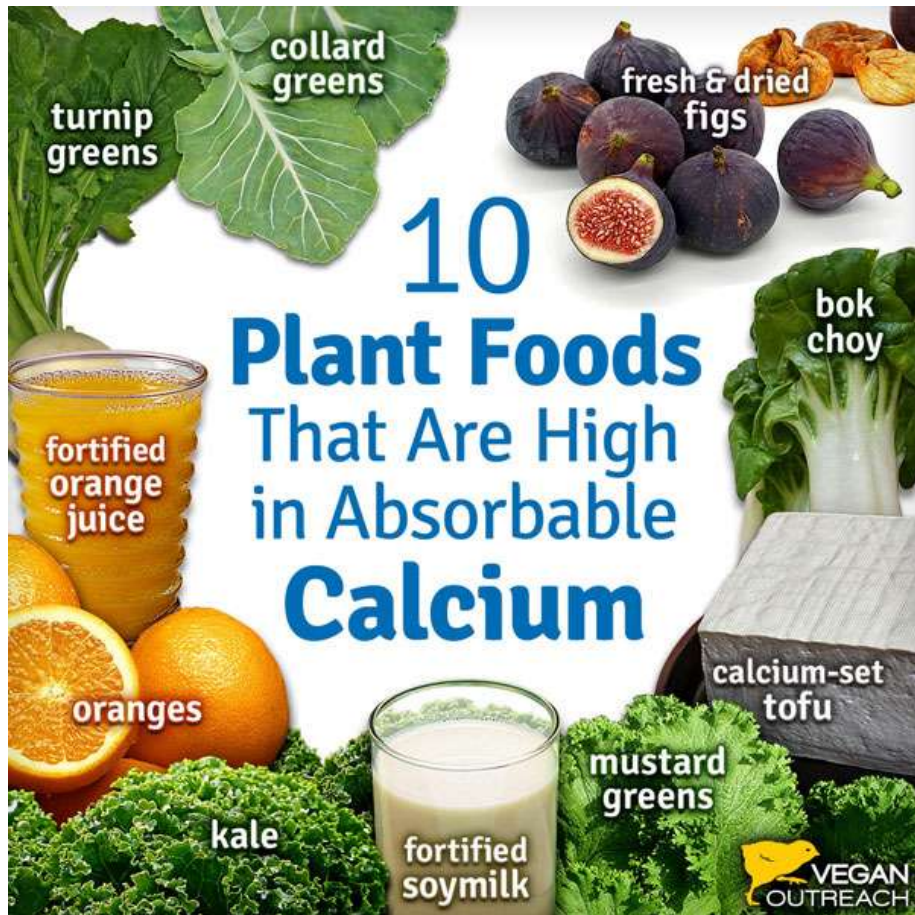
Cancer

Avoiding animal products and high-fat foods and eating plant-based foods can lower the risk of developing [certain types of cancer](#).

Brain Health

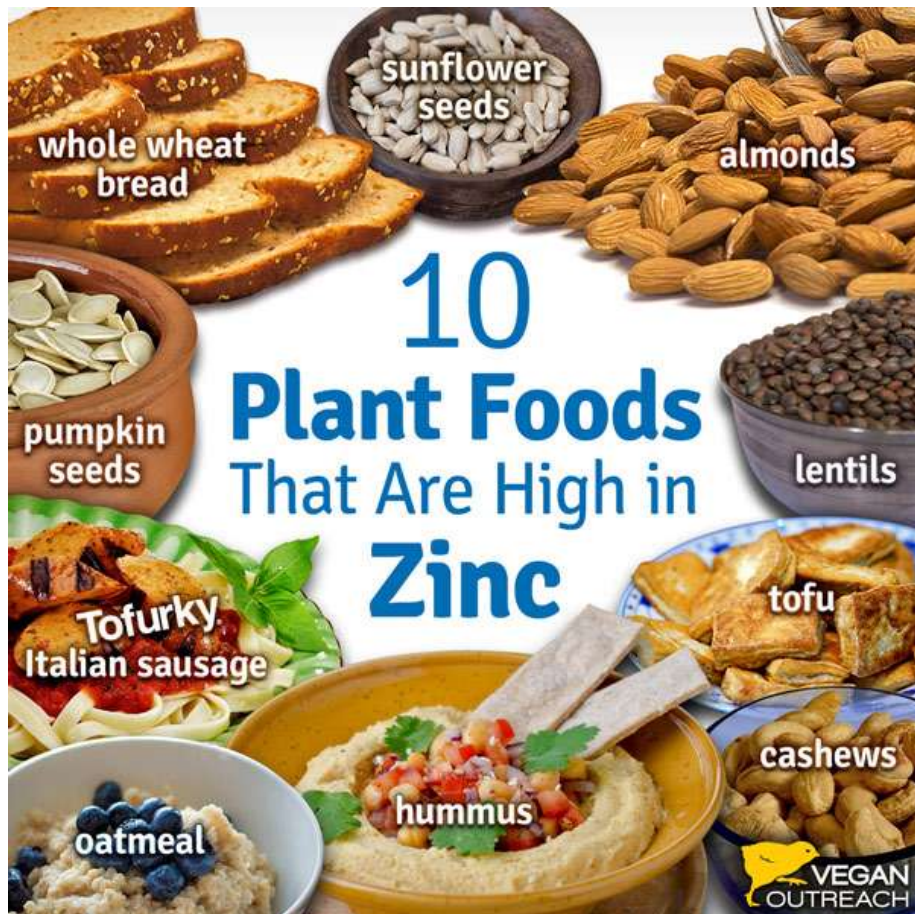
Saturated fat and trans fat—found in dairy products, meat, and fried foods—can increase the risk for [Alzheimer's disease](#) and other cognitive conditions. A plant-based diet avoids these foods and is rich in antioxidants, folate, and vitamin E, which may offer a protective effect.







<https://veganoutreach.org/plant-based-nutrition/>



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The Power Plate *featuring* The New Four Food Groups*

Fruit

3 or more servings a day*

Fruits are rich in fiber, vitamin C, and beta-carotene. Be sure to include at least one serving each day of fruits that are high in vitamin C—citrus fruits, melons, and strawberries are all good choices. Choose whole fruit over fruit juices, which do not contain very much fiber.

Serving size: 1 medium piece of fruit • $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked fruit • 4 ounces juice



Legumes

2 or more servings a day*

Legumes, which is another name for beans, peas, and lentils, are all good sources of fiber, protein, iron, calcium, zinc, and B vitamins. This group also includes chickpeas, baked and refried beans, soy milk, tempeh, and tofu.

Serving size: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked beans • 4 ounces tofu or tempeh • 8 ounces soy milk



Many of us grew up with the USDA's old Basic Four food groups, first introduced in 1956. The passage of time has seen an increase in our knowledge about the importance of fiber, the health risks of cholesterol and fats, and the disease-preventive power of many nutrients found exclusively in plant-based foods. We also have discovered that the plant kingdom provides excellent sources of the nutrients once only

associated with meat and dairy products—namely, protein and calcium.

In 1991, the Physicians Committee developed the New Four Food Groups, which formed the basis for the 2009 launch of the Power Plate. This no-cholesterol, low-fat plan supplies all of an average adult's daily nutritional requirements, including substantial amounts of fiber. In 2011, the USDA revised



*Be sure to include a good source of vitamin B12, such as fortified cereals or vitamin supplements.

Whole Grains

5 or more servings a day[†]

This group includes bread, rice, pasta, hot or cold cereal, corn, millet, barley, bulgur, buckwheat, groats, and tortillas. Build each of your meals around a hearty grain dish—grains are rich in fiber and other complex carbohydrates, as well as protein, B vitamins, and zinc.

Serving size: ½ cup hot cereal • 1 ounce dry cereal • 1 slice bread



Vegetables

4 or more servings a day[†]

Vegetables are packed with nutrients; they provide vitamin C, beta-carotene, riboflavin, iron, calcium, fiber, and other nutrients. Dark green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, collards, kale, mustard and turnip greens, chicory, or bok choy are especially good sources of these important nutrients. Dark yellow and orange vegetables such as carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin provide extra beta-carotene. Include generous portions of a variety of vegetables in your diet.

Serving size: 1 cup raw vegetables • ½ cup cooked vegetables



[†] Serving numbers are suggestions only. Eat a variety of plant foods throughout the day.

its recommendations with MyPlate, a plan that reduces the prominence of animal products and vegetable fats. But because regular consumption of such foods—even in lower quantities—poses serious health risks, the Physicians Committee recommends instead the Power Plate, based on the New Four Food Groups.

The major killers of Americans—heart disease, cancer, and

stroke—have a dramatically lower incidence among people consuming primarily plant-based diets. Weight problems—a contributor to a host of health problems—can also be brought under control by following the Power Plate recommendations.

Try the Power Plate and discover a healthier way to live! Learn more at www.ThePowerPlate.org.



Tips for making the switch to a vegetarian diet



- **Convenience foods** cut cooking time. Supermarkets and natural foods stores stock a huge array of instant soups and main-dish vegetarian convenience items. Many canned soups, such as minestrone, black bean, or vegetable, are vegetarian. Flavored rice or other grain mixes, like curried rice or tabouli salad, can be stretched into an entrée with a can of beans. Visit the frozen food section for internationally inspired vegetarian frozen entrées such as corn and bean enchiladas, lentil curry, or vegetarian pad thai. Or try vegetarian baked beans, refried beans, sloppy joe sauce, and meatless spaghetti sauce from the canned goods aisle.
- **Ask for it!** Even restaurants that don't offer vegetarian entrées can usually whip up a meatless pasta or vegetable plate if you ask. If attending a catered affair, catch the waiter before you are served and ask him or her to remove the chicken breast from your plate and slip on an extra baked potato. Most airlines offer vegetarian meals if you ask in advance; or you can always bring a meal on board with you.
- **Order your next pizza without cheese** but with a mountain of vegetable toppings.
- **Find vegetarian cookbooks** at your local library or bookstore and have fun experimenting with new foods and recipes.
- **International restaurants** are the best bets for finding vegetarian food when dining out. Italian, Chinese, Mexican, Thai, Japanese, and Indian restaurants all offer a wide variety of vegetarian dishes.
- **Texturized vegetable protein (TVP)** is fat-free, has a texture like ground beef, and is wonderful in tacos, chili, and sloppy joes. Look for it in the bulk food section of the grocery store.
- **Summer barbecues** are healthy and fun with meatless hot dogs and burgers. Or, for a real change of pace, grill thick slices of marinated vegetables like eggplant, zucchini, or tomatoes.
- **Check out ethnic groceries** for special vegetarian foods. Middle-Eastern delis offer stuffed grape leaves, falafel, and eggplant spreads. Italian markets are a wonderful place to find hearty homemade breads, sun-dried tomatoes, and fresh pasta. Indian and Asian markets offer many vegetarian delicacies, also.
- **The simplest dishes** are often the most satisfying. Brown rice, gently seasoned with herbs and lemon and sprinkled with chopped nuts or sunflower seeds, is a perfect dish.
- **When traveling, pack plenty of vegetarian snacks** like instant soups, fresh fruit, raw vegetables, trail mix, granola bars, and homemade oatmeal cookies. Fill a cooler with sandwiches and individual containers of juice and soymilk.

The Veganizer®

See how to change your regular meals into low-fat vegan meals.



*NOTE: VEGANIZER MACHINE NOT INCLUDED.

If your regular meal is:

BREAKFAST
Donut, coffee with cream, banana
Cereal with milk, orange juice, strawberries
Scrambled eggs, home fries,
English muffin, sausage, hot tea

LUNCH
Chicken burrito, rice, refried beans

Turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, and mayo; yogurt; potato chips

Chicken noodle soup, bread, green salad with Russian dressing

DINNER
Chicken fajita, rice, refried beans, piña colada

Hot and sour soup, beef and broccoli, rice

Broiled salmon, boiled new potatoes with parmesan cheese, asparagus with hollandaise

BLAMMO!

Try this meal instead:

Cinnamon raisin toast with jam; coffee with non-fat, non-dairy creamer; banana

Cereal with non-fat soy- or rice milk, orange juice, strawberries

Scrambled low-fat tofu, oven-roasted potatoes, English muffin, Gimme Lean™ fat-free sausage, hot tea

Seasoned tofu and sweet potato burrito with lettuce, tomato, and onion (hold the cheese); rice; vegetarian black beans

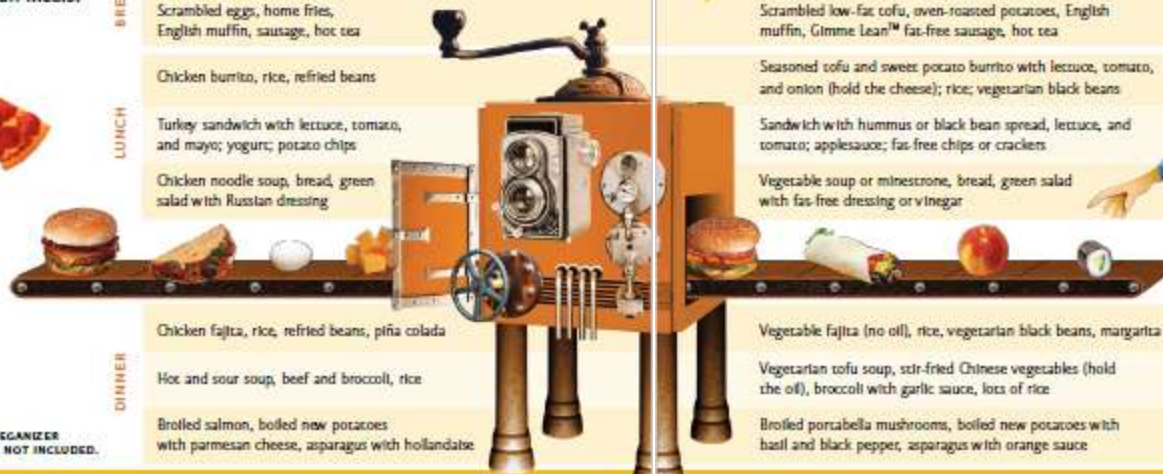
Sandwich with hummus or black bean spread, lettuce, and tomato; applesauce; fat-free chips or crackers

Vegetable soup or minestrone, bread, green salad with fat-free dressing or vinegar

Vegetable fajita (no oil), rice, vegetarian black beans, margarita

Vegetarian tofu soup, stir-fried Chinese vegetables (hold the oil), broccoli with garlic sauce, lots of rice

Broiled portabella mushrooms, boiled new potatoes with basil and black pepper, asparagus with orange sauce



10 VEGETARIAN STARTER KIT

7 Supplements You May Need on a Vegan Diet

One common concern about vegan diets is whether they provide your body with all the vitamins and minerals it needs. Here are 7 nutrients that you may need to supplement with while on a vegan diet.

1. Vitamin B12

It's extremely important that all vegans get enough vitamin B12. The only reliable way to achieve this is by eating fortified foods or taking a vitamin B12 supplement.

2. Vitamin D

Vitamin D deficiency is a problem among vegans and omnivores alike. Vegans unable to maintain normal blood levels through fortified foods and sun exposure should consider taking a supplement.

3. Long-Chain Omega-3s

Vegans tend to have lower blood and tissue levels of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids. Therefore, they may benefit from supplementing with EPA and DHA.

4. Iodine

Iodine plays an important role in your thyroid function and metabolism. Vegans not getting enough iodine from seaweed or iodized salt should consider taking an iodine supplement.

5. Iron

Vegans not getting enough iron from their diets should consider fortified foods or a supplement. However, overly high levels can be harmful and iron supplements are not recommended for everyone.

6. Calcium

Vegans consuming too little dietary calcium should consider taking a daily supplement. This is especially important for those getting less than 525 mg per day.

7. Zinc

Vegans unable to reach the zinc RDA should first focus on adding zinc-rich foods to their diets. Those with low blood zinc levels should consider adding a daily supplement.

See www.healthline.com/nutrition/7-supplements-for-vegans for more info on each of these nutrients.

SAMPLE MENUS

Breakfast

3 oatmeal pancakes with applesauce topping, calcium-fortified orange juice, fresh fruit

Lunch

Bean burritos: black beans in corn tortillas, topped with chopped lettuce, tomatoes, and salsa, spinach salad with tahini-lemon dressing

Dinner

Chinese stir-fry over brown rice: tofu chunks, broccoli, pea pods, water chestnuts, and Chinese cabbage (bok choy), cantaloupe chunks drizzled with fresh lime juice

Snack

Dried figs

Breakfast

1 cup oatmeal with cinnamon and raisins, ½ cup fortified soymilk, 1 slice toast with 1 tablespoon almond butter, ½ grapefruit

Lunch

Whole wheat pita stuffed with hummus (see recipe on page 14), sliced tomatoes, and lettuce, carrot sticks

Dinner

1 cup baked beans, baked sweet potato, 1 cup steamed collard greens drizzled with lemon juice, baked apple

Snack

Banana soymilk shake

Ingredient Substitution Chart



MEAT SUBSTITUTES

Legumes, beans, peas, and lentils are an all-natural, high-fiber protein source that can easily be used as the main course or in place of meat in recipes.

Veggie burgers, made of defatted soybeans, provides a meat-like taste and texture and can substitute for ground meat.

Tempeh, made from fermented soybeans, has a distinct flavor and meaty texture that can be used in place of ground meat and works well in curries, chilis, and stir-fries.

Seitan, made from wheat gluten, is well-suited for shaping into roasts or for replacing strips or chunks of meat in recipes such as fajitas, stews, or stir-fries.

Portobello mushrooms have a savory flavor for filling a meat layer in a dish or as "burgers" at your next barbecue, especially after being marinated in low-fat dressing and then grilled or heated in a frying pan.

Tofu, a curd made from soybeans, is mild in taste and easily absorbs the flavor of any recipe. Soft tofu works well in soups, sauces, and desserts, and firmer varieties work well in stir-fries and other recipes requiring tofu to hold its shape. For a denser texture, freeze tofu, thaw, and squeeze out excess water before using it in your recipe.

Textured vegetable protein (TVP), made of defatted soybeans, provides a substitute for ground meat.

OIL & BUTTER ALTERNATIVES

Sautéing: Water or vegetable broth.

Baking: Applesauce or any variety of mashed beans can be used in place of oil, using a 1:1 ratio. Black beans are easily camouflaged into brownies and white beans into banana bread, as examples.

EGG SUBSTITUTES

One egg is equal to:

1/4 cup silken tofu blended

1/2 mashed banana

1/4 cup applesauce or pureed fruit

1/2 cup soy or rice yogurt

1 1/2 tsp. of vegan egg replacement powder + 2 tbsp. lukewarm water; follow package directions

1 tbsp. ground flaxseed meal + 3 tbsp. water

1/4 cup mashed white potatoes, sweet potatoes, or pumpkin

2 tbsp. potato starch, cornstarch, or arrowroot

1 tbsp. chia seed + 3 tbsp. water

1/4 cup cooked oats

1 tsp. baking powder

DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

Milk: Equal portion of almond, oat, soy, hazelnut, or rice milk, etc.

Creams: Almond milk (or any nut milk), soy milk, coconut milk, mashed potato, pureed garbanzo beans, pureed tofu, nondairy sour cream, soy whipping cream, or soy creamer.

Parmesan cheese: Nutritional yeast, garlic powder, and/or chopped walnuts or almonds.

Cheese: Soy-, rice-, and nut-based cheese alternatives, or nutritional yeast.

Butter: Dairy-free non-hydrogenated margarine, applesauce, nut butters, or hummus for cooking, baking, or spreading.

Ricotta cheese: Firm tofu, drained and crumble with added seasoning.

