

Seven Steps to A Vegetarian Diet

Step One:

Eat enough food to meet your calorie requirement for the day. You will find you need to eat much more in order to maintain your weight.

Step Two:

Eat a variety of foods. Variety breeds longevity. If you eat the same foods every day, you will lose interest and revert back to your old eating habits. Look through vegetarian magazines and cookbooks for meal suggestions.

Step Three: Replace meat, poultry, and fish with soy-based products or complementary proteins.

Complementary Protein Guide:

Build high quality protein. Simply match the amino strengths and weaknesses of individual foods. For example, nuts, seeds, and grains are generally low in the amino acid lysine and relatively high in tryptophan and the sulfur - containing amino acids. Legumes, on the other hand, are good sources of lysine and poor sources of tryptophan and sulfur-containing amino acids. By combining nuts, seeds, and grains with legumes, you can create a complementary protein that meets your body's needs.

Complementary Combinations

Legumes + Seeds and Nuts

Navy bean soup with sesame crackers, peanut butter brown toast with sunflower seeds, trail mix of peanuts, raisins, sunflower seeds.

Legumes + Grains and Cereals

Red beans and brown rice

Super foods high in protein

Spirulina, Chlorella, Bee Pollen,

Step Four

Make sure whole grains and legumes are the mainstay of your meals. Choose whole wheat pastas, brown rice, and try alternative grains such as amaranth, bulgur and millet. Add a variety of beans, lentils, and nuts to your meals.

Step Five:

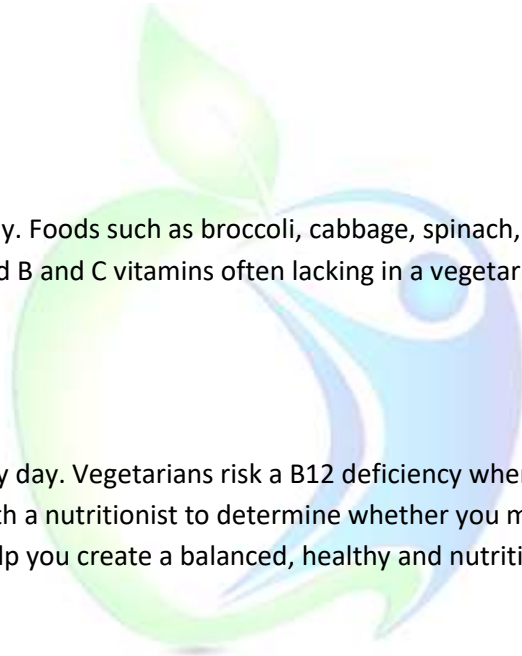
If desired, reduce or eliminate eggs, cheeses, and milk from your meals. Replace with fresh almond milk or other nut and seed milks.

Step Six:

Eat green leafy vegetables every day. Foods such as broccoli, cabbage, spinach, and lettuce leaf supply the body with the iron, calcium, and B and C vitamins often lacking in a vegetarian diet.

Step Seven:

Take a B complex supplement every day. Vegetarians risk a B12 deficiency when they completely avoid eating animal products. Consult with a nutritionist to determine whether you may be at risk for any other nutrient deficiencies or to help you create a balanced, healthy and nutritious meal plan.



Barbara Karafokas
Health, Nutrition & Wellness Consultant