



A FEW BASICS ON VEGAN NUTRITION

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Being vegan is the best thing you can do for your complete wellbeing: for your mental, spiritual and physical health. However, dietary change is not as simple as excluding food groups, as this can potentially lead to deficiencies. It is very easy to fulfil all your body's needs on a vegan (and a raw) diet. This short, basic outline includes some basics on vegan dietary planning, however please feel free to contact me with any further questions, especially on raw diets.

WHAT IS VEGAN? This lifestyle refers to not using animals for our purpose of food production (meat, dairy, eggs, honey, some food colourings) or production of material items (clothing, footwear, cosmetics). We wish to remove animal exploitation and cruelty and demonstrate a way of life that is peaceful and healthful.

WHAT FOODS DO I CHOOSE? We can easily put together delicious food choices that do not use animal products in any way. The best way to do this is to choose wholefoods, as close to their natural form as possible. However there are so many vegan alternatives for traditional 'animal foods' now available that there is nothing you can feel that you are missing out on!

SOME VITAMINS AND MINERALS TO KEEP AN EYE ON Planning and meeting all your requirements is easy on a vegan diet however it is a good idea to be conscious of a few vitamins and minerals that may be lacking:

1. **IRON** – if low this can lead to fatigue and poor immunity as your red blood cells are unable to carry enough oxygen. This is especially important for menstruating women, athletes (runners) and those who have blood loss (eg. Have ulcers). Choose foods supplemented with iron or take a daily supplement. Have your levels checked regularly to be sure as it can be dangerous to supplement when your body is not lacking.
2. **CALCIUM** – this is important for bone development and bone strength as well as muscle activity. You must choose vegan foods that are fortified with calcium, or take a supplement. This is especially important for children, teenagers and girls in particular, and menopausal women or women lacking oestrogen production.
3. **ZINC** – is needed for the immune system in particular as well as playing many important roles in the body for enzyme function and growth. Choose legumes that have been soaked and well cooked, breads that have been leavened with yeasts, and products that are fortified with zinc.
4. **B12** – this is only available from animal sources so **MUST** be gained from choosing enough vegan foods fortified with B12, or taking a supplement. This is very important as the side effects of low B12 are very dangerous however take a long time to show in the body.
5. **OMEGA 3** – Extremely important in so many areas of body functioning including vision, skin, nervous system – mood and brain health, as well as reducing inflammation – helpful for conditions such as arthritis. This can be lacking but is very easy to ensure adequate doses by using oils such as flaxseed or chia seeds, and by supplementing your diet with such oils.

WHAT ABOUT PROTEIN?! This is such a common question, but really is not of concern with an adequately planned vegan diet. As long as you are choosing enough serves from the soy/plant/vegetable protein based food group, you have no reason for concern. If your needs are higher such as for athletes or pregnant women, you can choose to supplement your diet with a vegan protein that is rice/pea based.

THE FOOD TABLE We are all familiar with the food ‘plate’ and food ‘pyramids’ issued by Government bodies. Here I have put together a simple table for you to serve as a guide in making substitutions. The reason why we do this is to make sure we make daily choices from all groups, in order to meet all our vitamin, mineral and macronutrient requirements that our bodies need in order to function most efficiently – so we can be amazing vegan role models!

VEGAN FOOD GROUP	FOODS TO INCLUDE (some examples)	IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS PRESENT (not comprehensive)	EXAMPLE OF A SERVE	GUIDE TO SERVES (depends on individual)
VEGETABLES	Vegetables eg. carrots, broccoli, capsicum, cauliflower, potatoes, dark leafy greens	Vitamins, minerals, fibre, carbohydrates	1 cup leafy greens, ½ cup peas and corn	5+ aim for more (but this does not include potato chips!)
FRUITS AND DRIED FRUITS	fruits eg. apples, peaches, oranges, pears,	Vitamins, minerals, fibre, carbohydrates, calcium	1 piece of fruit (apple), a tablespoon of dried fruits	2
BREADS AND CEREALS	bread, pasta, rice, cereals, grains, crackers	Carbohydrates, B vitamins, look for fortified with iodine also		4+
PULSES AND LEGUMES, NUTS	lentils, chickpeas, almonds, cashew nuts,	Protein, carbohydrates, zinc	½ cup legumes (chickpeas, lentils), 30g nuts	2+
SOY FOODS/VEGETABLE PROTEIN-BASED FOODS AND ‘MEAT ALTERNATIVES’	Tofu, tempeh, gluten protein foods – seitan, ‘quorn’ mince	Protein, choose fortified with calcium and B12	100g tofu or tempeh, ½ cup	2+
FORTIFIED SOY/PLANT-BASED ‘DAIRY ALTERNATIVES’	Fortified soy milk, nut milks such as almond milk, quinoa milk, coconut milk, fortified soy and nut ‘cheeses’, vegan cream cheese, vegan yoghurt	These must be fortified with nutrients including calcium and D2 or D3 (ensure this labelled as a vegan D3), often magnesium, B12, zinc and iron will be helpful	1 cup (250ml) fortified soy milk or dairy-milk alternative, 30g fortified ‘cheese’ alternative	2+
HEALTHY FATS	Avocado, nut ‘butters’, flaxseeds (linseeds) and oil, chia seeds, algae supplements	Omega 3 essential fatty acids, omega 6 and 9 fatty acids. Carbohydrate and fibre, magnesium and zinc in some foods.	¼ avocado (a ‘spread’), 1 tbsp. nut butter without added sugars/oils, 1 tbsp flaxseed oil, 1 tbsp chia seeds or flaxseeds (linseeds)	1 approx
SUPERFOODS	Berries including goji, acai, macqui, chia seeds, Spirulina, chlorella, wheatgrass, barleygrass, camu camu, maca,	Antioxidants, fibre, carbohydrate, larger doses of vitamins and minerals, depending on the food – vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, omega 3 fats, aid in endurance, stamina, adaptogenic properties, hormonal balance, longevity.. These all depend on the particular superfood and their amazing quality	Varies greatly depending of the superfood and potency. 1 tbsp chia seeds, 1 tsp maca powder. Always build up dosage of superfoods gradually	2+
OTHERS	‘Treat foods’ that are high in saturated fats and sugars	Vegan cakes, biscuits, ‘butter’ spreads, chocolates, lollies	1 biscuit, 6 lollies, 1 tbsp ‘vegan butter’, 2 square chocolate	0-2

In the vegan food model, many foods cross over groups. This is another reason why vegan food is more amazing, covering more bases in each serve!

EXAMPLE OF A DAILY VEGAN DIET THAT MEETS REQUIREMENTS:

Breakfast – fortified vegan cereal/muesli, mixed with a tub of fortified soy yoghurt

Snack –rye crispbreads, carrot, capsicum and celery sticks with homemade guacamole dip

Lunch – sandwich on wholegrain bread with hummus, lettuce, sprouts, tomato, cucumber, beetroot

Afternoon snack – a glass of fortified soy or almond milk, apple, small handful of almonds

Dinner – lasagne made with soy mince or seitan mince, white sauce made from soy or nut milk, wholegrain lasagne pasta sheets and a tomato pasta sauce with mushrooms, carrot, zucchini

Dessert – a berry fruit crumble made with rolled wholegrain oats, date sweetener and coconut oil

RECIPE

QUICK MID-WEEK TOFU NOODLE STIR-FRY serves 2

300g firm tofu, cut into cubes

1 tsp sesame oil

1 tsp canola oil

1 tsp crushed garlic

1 tsp crushed ginger

¼ cup spring onion, chopped

2 tbsp tamari

1 tbsp coconut sugar

1 tbsp coconut vinegar (optional)

1 pkt frozen mixed stir fry vegetables, defrosted

1 pkt wok ready Singapore stir fry noodles

1 'chicken style' vegan stock cube

½ cup water

1 tbsp cornflour mixed into ¼ cup water to make a smooth paste

¼ cup raw cashew nuts

1. Use a non-stick chargrill pan to grill the tofu for a few minutes each side. Set aside.
2. Heat up a wok and dry toast the cashew nuts. Set these aside.
3. Put the oils into the wok and add the ginger and garlic, frying them until fragrant, but do not burn.
4. Add the spring onion and vegetables and fry briefly to heat through.
5. Add the sauce ingredients including tamari, coconut sugar, coconut vinegar, stock cube and water. Stir well.
6. Add the noodles, breaking them apart loosely with your hands and stir through.
7. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the cornflour paste. Stir this through well.
8. Mix the tofu back through and make sure it is still hot.
9. Serve into bowls and sprinkle with the toasted cashew nuts.

Enjoy being a happy and healthy vegan! Please contact me with any further questions: raw.addictions@gmail.com

