

# Choosing a Plant-Based Diet: Part One

Have you ever thought about choosing a plant-based diet? There are tons of different ways to approach it, including going vegan.

Vegans avoid all animal products and foods that come from animals. Think eggs, milk, yogurt, honey, etc (1).

## Health Benefits of a Vegan Diet

Research from the Adventist Health Study (2) compared nutrient intake and overall health indicators of non-vegetarians, vegetarians, and vegans. Vegans had the lowest intake of total fat, saturated fat, and trans fats. These are associated with higher risk of heart disease, metabolic disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Vegans also had a higher intake of vitamin C, folate, beta carotene, and vitamin E, all of which are nutrients that are known to reduce risk of chronic disease.

## 6 Tips for Healthful Vegan Meals

A healthful diet is often varied -- so mix it up!

- **Choose nutrient-packed whole grains** such as quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, oats, barley, and wild rice.
- **Enjoy plant-based protein foods** like tofu, tempeh, edamame, legumes, nuts, seeds, and nut butters.
- **Fill half of your plate with different colors of vegetables.** The different colors contain various amounts of phytochemicals that help promote good health. Why not add red peppers, green broccoli, orange carrots, yellow summer squash, white or brown potatoes, and purple eggplant to your diet?



- Instead of dairy products, **try soy or almond milk** fortified with vitamin B12, calcium, and Vitamin D.
- Choose fresh, dried, or canned **fruit** in its own juice for snacks and a sweet at the end of meals.
- Instead of butter, **use oils from plants and nuts** such as olive, flax, canola, or walnut oils.

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## References

1. Veganism in a Nutshell. The Vegetarian Resource Group <http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/vegan.htm> accessed 10-15-13.
2. Nutrient Profiles of Vegetarian and Non-vegetarian Dietary Patterns. Rizzo NS, Jaceldo-Siegl K, Sabate J, Fraser GE. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2013 Aug 26.

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