



Tuckatalk

Vegetarian Eating for Children

Vegetarians do not eat meat and may not eat eggs or dairy foods. Vegans avoid all animal foods.

A vegetarian diet can provide all the nutrients your child needs if it is well planned. Special care is needed to ensure your child has enough energy, iron, calcium and vitamin B12.

What Do Children Need?

Energy (kilojoules or calories)

Vegetarian diets are high in fibre and can be filling for small tummies. Include plenty of healthy fats to help meet your child's energy needs.

- Full fat milk, cheese, yoghurt, custard
- Soy drinks with added calcium
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds (ground smooth for young children, e.g. peanut butter)
- Avocado, margarine, oils, hummus

Iron (and good protein foods)

Iron is needed for healthy blood. Iron-rich protein foods are important meat replacers.

- Eggs
- Legumes
- Tofu
- Nuts and seeds
- TVP (textured vegetable protein)
- Nutmeat and vegetarian luncheon 'meats'



Calcium (and good protein foods)

Calcium is needed for healthy bones and teeth.

- Milk
- Yoghurt
- Cheese
- Tofu
- Soy drinks with added calcium.



Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is needed to make red blood cells and to maintain healthy nerve cells. Sources include:

- Eggs
- Dairy foods (milk, cheese, yoghurt)
- Soy drinks (with vitamin B12 added)
- Marmite™
- Sanitarium Soy Tasty™ range

A vitamin B12 supplement may be needed for vegans

Vitamin C

Include foods rich in vitamin C with meals and snacks to help the body absorb more iron.

Try:

- Oranges
- Capsicum
- Tomato
- Broccoli
- Green leafy vegetables
- Berry fruits
- Melons
- Pineapple
- Orange Juice

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Introducing Solids to a Baby

Solid foods can be offered to your baby around 6 months of age.

Try:

- Baby rice cereal (iron enriched)
- Pureed fruit and vegetables
- Pureed legumes and lentils
- Mashed tofu
- Semolina (wheat)
- Egg
- Nut butters (unsalted)



The *From Milk to More* booklet available from your Maternal and Child Health nurse offers more information on the introduction of solids

Healthy Snacks

Think of snacks as mini meals. Choose mostly healthy foods that provide extra vitamins and minerals.

Try to include a high energy food (see over page) with each snack.

- Wholemeal or iron-enriched bread with spreads
- Wholemeal crackers with nut butters, Marmite™, cheese or pesto
- Pikelets, scones, English muffins with spreads
- Hummus with soft vegetable sticks
- Yoghurt or custard
- Piece of fruit and cheese stick
- Celery filled with smooth nut butter
- Fruit-filled cereal (dry) with cup of milk to drink

Meal Plan for a Healthy Vegetarian Diet

Quantities will vary depending on the age of your child. Appetite will vary from day to day.

Breakfast

Cereal with milk
Fruit or small glass of juice

Morning snack

Wholemeal cracker with margarine & Marmite
Fresh fruit
Glass of milk or soy drink* with Milo or Ovaltine®**

Lunch

Wholemeal bread, buttered
Egg or nut butter or baked beans
Capsicum or carrot sticks or cherry tomatoes
Glass of milk or soy drink

Afternoon snack

Fresh fruit or 1 tablespoon dried fruit
1 slice cheese or glass soy drink
½–1 slice buttered fruit loaf

Dinner

2–4 tablespoons cooked lentils in sauce
Noodles or pasta or rice
Raw or cooked vegies e.g. green leafy vegies
Custard or yoghurt or glass of soy drink

* Choose calcium enriched soy drinks

** Milo and Ovaltine® are good sources of iron



Where can I find out more information?

HERE ARE 3 WAYS:

1. **TALK** to your child's GP
2. **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** with an ACT Health Community Dietitian by phoning **6207 9977**
3. **CHECK OUT** more Tuckatalk factsheets at **www.health.act.gov.au**

