

Healthy vegan eating



This handout will help you to plan a healthy balanced
vegan diet for your child.

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What is a vegan diet?

A vegan diet consists of plant-based foods such as grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes (kidney beans, black beans, chick peas and lentils).



All animal based products such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy, or any of their products are not included.

A vegan diet can be healthy for everyone. Being aware of the special considerations for vegan children will help you plan a healthy, balanced diet to help support your child's growth and development.



You will need to consider:

- Protein
- Healthy fats
- Vitamin and mineral supplements
- Calories for energy and growth



Protein

What is protein?

Protein plays an important role in the growth and repair of tissues in the body. Protein is made up of small units called amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of your skin, muscle and organs. Our bodies can make some of the amino acids that are needed to build protein, but others must come from the food we eat. These amino acids are called essential amino acids.

Most plant sources of protein do not contain all the essential amino acids the body needs. However, **eating different sources of plant protein throughout the day** will make sure your child gets all of the needed essential amino acids that they need to grow.



1. Legumes

Legumes are rich in protein and are also excellent sources of fibre, B vitamins and iron.

Examples of legumes include kidney beans, soybeans, peas, lentils, black-eyed peas, chickpeas and lima beans. Try soaking and cooking dried peas and beans before meal times or use canned legumes to eat on their own or as a side dish.

Other ideas include adding legumes in recipes such as chili, baked beans, soup, stew, burritos and rice dishes.



2. Soy

Soy products are a good source of protein and are a great alternative to meat. They can boost the protein, calcium and iron content of many dishes. Soy products can be used in just about any recipe. Eating soy on a regular basis is safe. Speak to your dietitian if you have any concerns about the safety of soy.

Sources of soy:

- Tofu or tempeh can be used in place of meat in many recipes. Tofu and tempeh are made from soybeans. They can be crumbled, cubed, grilled, stir-fried or baked. Try marinating tofu or tempeh before cooking as they absorb flavours well.
- Soy-based meat analogs (substitutes) such as veggie burgers, hot dogs and deli slices can be used in place of meat-based ones. Look for those that are fortified with extra minerals and vitamins such as vitamin B 12.
- Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) is processed soybean protein that can look and taste like meat. TVP can be used in place of meat in recipes such as chili, tacos, sloppy joes, casseroles or spaghetti sauce.
- Soy flour will increase the protein content of baked products. A ½ cup supplies 22 grams of protein. Replace up to ½ of the regular flour called for in your favourite recipes with soy flour.
- Edamame is a young soybean that can be purchased in or out of an edible pod. They can be boiled or steamed.



NOTE: Fortified soy beverage is the only alternative to cow's milk because it has similar amounts of protein. It is also enriched with calcium and vitamin D to match the levels in cow's milk. Examples include Vitasoy, Edensoy, SoNice and Soy Dream. Fortified soy milk can be substituted for cow's milk in most recipes.



There are many other alternative plant-based “milk” beverages available, but they **do not** have enough protein or fat for growing and active children. Many are also **not** fortified with calcium and vitamins A or D. Examples include rice, almond, hemp, coconut and oat beverages.



Fortified soy beverages are not suitable as a main milk source for children younger than 2 years of age. For children who are no longer breastfed, use **fortified soy infant formula** until 2 years of age (Health Canada).

3. Nuts and seeds

- Nuts such as peanuts, almonds and cashews.
- Seeds such as sunflower, pumpkin and sesame.
- Nuts and seed butters.



Healthy fats

Children need to have healthy fats in their diet to support their growth and development. Healthy fats are an important source of calories and help our bodies absorb fat-soluble vitamins such as Vitamin A, D, E and K.

Unsaturated fats are the healthiest types of fat and the two main types are:

- **Monounsaturated fatty acids:** Found in many plant based liquid oils such as olive oil, canola oil and sesame oil. These fats are good for your child's eyes, brain and heart.
- **Polyunsaturated fatty acids:** There are two types of polyunsaturated fatty acids (omega-3 and omega 6) that are essential. This means they cannot be made by our bodies and must be provided by the diet.



Important
Information

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in walnuts, flax seeds and chia seeds and help with brain development in children.

Omega-6 fatty acids are found in nuts, seeds and grains, and are important for overall health.

Ways to include healthy fats into your child's diet include:

- Snacking on nuts and seeds.
 - Adding extra liquid oils when cooking foods.
 - Using avocado as a spread on sandwiches.
 - Adding extra nut butter on toast or crackers.
-

Vitamin and mineral supplements

Does my child need a supplement?

Children following a vegan diet may need to take a supplement, as it can be difficult to get enough of some nutrients in a vegan diet. Talk to your doctor or dietitian about what supplements to include.

Nutrient	What does it do?	Foods to include	When is a supplement needed?
Vitamin B12	Plays a key role in maintaining the health of nerve cells and red blood cells.	<p>Vitamin B12 is mainly found in animal products. However, there are a few plant-based foods that have been fortified with vitamin B12.</p> <p>Examples of one serving of vitamin B12 rich foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fortified soy, rice or almond milk ● Fortified breakfast cereals ● Soy based meat analogs such as veggie burgers, hot dogs or deli slices - you will need to check labels as not all brands contain vitamin B12 ● Nutritional yeast 	Most of the time

Nutrient	What does it do?	Foods to include	When is a supplement needed?
Iron	Helps carry oxygen through the body and helps form red blood cells. If iron levels are low, your child may feel weak, tired and/or look pale.	<p>Because plant sources of iron are not absorbed as well as iron from animal products, it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a food source of vitamin C with your child's meals. Vitamin C helps your child's body absorb iron. Some sources of vitamin C include broccoli, green and red peppers, citrus fruit or juice, strawberries, tomatoes and potatoes. • Calcium supplements can interfere with iron absorption. If you give your child calcium supplements, talk to your doctor or dietitian about calcium and iron. <p>Examples of sources of iron:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortified breakfast cereals • Tofu • Pumpkin seeds • Blackstrap molasses • Legumes, such as beans, peas and lentils • Baked potato with skin • Almonds and cashews • Almond and cashew butter • Dried fruits such as apricots, currants, figs, prunes, raisins • Greens such as broccoli, kale, bok choy <p>Soy-based meat analogs such as vegetarian burgers, hot dogs and deli slices.</p>	Most of the time

Nutrient	What does it do?	Foods to include	When is a supplement needed?
Vitamin D	<p>Vitamin D works with calcium to help build strong bones and teeth. Your child gets vitamin D by eating fortified foods, taking a vitamin D supplement, or from sunlight on their skin.</p> <p>The amount of vitamin D absorbed from the sun depends on where you live, the time of year and how dark your child's skin is.</p>	<p>Many people living in the northern hemisphere (Canada) require vitamin D3 supplementation in the months without very much sunlight (October to March).</p> <p>Examples of sources of vitamin D:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortified soymilk and rice milk • Breakfast cereal* • Vegan margarine* <p>*Check the labels to make sure the product is fortified.</p>	Most of the time
Omega 3	<p>Helps your child to grow and become healthy. Omega-3 fats are a type of healthy fat that is important for brain development.</p>	<p>Include 2 servings of vegan sources of omega-3 every day. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground flaxseeds and flaxseed oil • Chia seeds • Canola or soybean oil, or margarines made with these oils • Hemp seed oil and shelled hemp seeds • Walnuts • Soybeans and tofu, cooked 	Sometimes

Nutrient	What does it do?	Foods to include	When is a supplement needed?
Calcium	Helps build healthy bones and is important at all ages.	<p>Examples of sources of calcium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tofu processed with calcium (check label) • Kale, broccoli, bok choy • Orange juice fortified with calcium* (1/2 cup) • Calcium fortified soy, rice or almond milk* • Calcium fortified breakfast cereal • Almonds • Soybeans, cooked • Dried figs <p>*Always read the label to be sure that these products are fortified with calcium.</p>	Sometimes
Zinc	Helps your child's immune system protect his or her body against disease, helps heal wounds, and is important for their growth and development.	<p>Getting enough zinc is important for vegans and non-vegans. Our bodies absorb less zinc from plant sources than from animal sources.</p> <p>Meeting your child's recommended number of daily servings from grains and legumes, nuts and other protein-rich foods will help your child meet their daily zinc needs.</p> <p>Examples of zinc-rich foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals • Nuts • Legumes • Yeast-fermented whole grain bread 	Sometimes

Calories for energy and growth

Children need extra calories and nutrients:

- during times of rapid growth
- when they are physically active
- when managing a health condition

Eating a vegan diet can be rich in fibre and often low in calories. This can cause your child to feel full before they have had a chance to eat enough calories. Watch your child for any changes in their growth or level of activity. Talk to your dietitian to make sure that your child is healthy and growing as they should.



Include high-calorie foods such as:

- ✓ Avocado
- ✓ Nut and seed butters
- ✓ Dried fruits
- ✓ Vegetable oils
- ✓ Full-fat soy and rice beverages
- ✓ Bean/chickpea spreads (such as hummus)



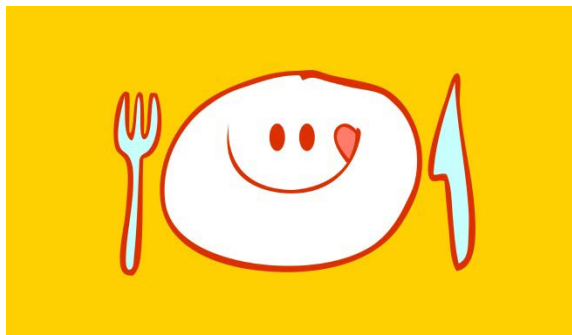
Pair these high calorie foods with high-fibre foods (such as hummus and whole wheat pita, peanut butter and banana, avocado on a whole wheat bagel).

Meal planning for your child

These are the recommended number of servings to help your child to grow healthy. Children may need to eat extra servings.

Food Group	Serving Sizes	Toddlers Aged 1 to 3	Children Aged 4 to 8	Children Aged 9 to 13
		Number of servings to include each day		
Vegetables and Fruit	1 cup raw ½ cup chopped/cooked	4	5	6
Whole Grain Products	1 slice bread ½ bagel 1 cup cold cereal	3	4	6
Fortified Soy Beverage	1 cup fortified soy beverage*	2	2	3 to 4
Plant Based Proteins	¾ cup legumes 2 tbsp nut butter ¾ cup tofu	1	1	1 to 2
Healthy Fats	1 tsp olive oil or canola oil ½ avocado ¼ cup nuts or seeds	3	4	5

* Fortified soy infant formula is recommended for children under 2 years of age.



Sample vegan diet for your child

This menu is designed for a 2 year-old vegan

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ cup fortified soy milk ½ cup oatmeal with 1 tsp flaxseed ½ banana
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ whole wheat english muffin 2 tbsp nut or peanut butter
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¼ cup steamed chopped carrots with 1 tsp olive oil 10 whole wheat crackers 3 tbsp hummus ½ cup fortified soy milk
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 small whole wheat pita ½ cup vanilla soy yogurt ½ cup strawberries
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¼ cup whole wheat cooked spaghetti ¼ cup spaghetti sauce ¼ cup firm chopped tofu ½ cup fortified soy milk ¼ cup steamed chopped broccoli with 1 tsp olive oil 1 vegan cookie

This menu is designed for a 4 year-old vegan

Breakfast	<p>1 slice whole wheat bread 2 tbsp nut or peanut butter with 1 tsp chia seeds ½ apple ½ cup fortified soy milk</p>
Snack	<p>½ cup cucumber slices 1 large whole wheat pita 3 tablespoons hummus and ¼ cup sliced avocado</p>
Lunch	<p>1 falafel prepared in 1 tsp canola oil ½ hamburger bun ½ cup fortified soy milk ½ cup steamed carrots with vegan margarine ½ banana</p>
Snack	<p>1 cup popcorn 2 tbsp olive oil 1 tsp nutritional yeast 1/2 cup vanilla soy yogurt</p>
Dinner	<p>½ cup whole wheat spaghetti ¼ cup spaghetti sauce ¼ cup steamed broccoli with 1 tsp olive oil ¼ cup firm tofu ½ cup fortified soy milk 1 vegan cookie</p>
Snack	<p>2 tbsp nut butter ½ whole wheat english muffin ½ cup blueberries</p>

This menu is designed for a 9 year-old vegan

Breakfast	2 slices of whole wheat bread 3 tbsp of nut or peanut butter with 1 tsp of chia seeds 1 medium apple 1 cup fortified soy milk
Snack	1 small whole wheat pita 3 tbsp hummus with ¼ cup sliced avocado 1 large carrot chopped
Lunch	2 falafel fried in 2 tbsp canola oil 1 whole wheat hamburger bun 1 cup fortified soy milk ¼ cup baby spinach, ¼ cup mushrooms , and ¼ cup cubed avocado 1 banana
Snack	2 cups popcorn 2 tsp olive oil 2 tbsp nutritional yeast 1/2 cup vanilla soy yogurt
Dinner	1 cup whole wheat cooked spaghetti ½ cup spaghetti sauce ½ cup steamed broccoli with 2 tsp olive oil 1 cup fortified soy milk ½ cup firm chopped tofu 1 vegan cookie

Checklist for healthy eating

- ✓ Include a variety of foods from each of the food groups.
- ✓ Eat at least the minimum number of servings from each of the food groups.
- ✓ Involve your child in cooking and mealtime preparation.
- ✓ Include foods that are rich in calcium, iron, omega-3, vitamin D, and take recommended supplements.
- ✓ Cook with iodized table salt (not just sea salt or kosher salt) to make sure your child gets enough iodine.
- ✓ Use healthy fats at every meal.



School lunch and snack ideas

School lunch ideas

- Tempeh/tofu, vegetable and hummus whole wheat pita pocket.
- Veggie burger or falafel on a whole wheat bun with spinach and mushrooms.
- Whole wheat pasta salad with cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, chickpeas, olive oil.
- Vegetarian chili with beans, lentils, peppers, tomatoes, onion and garlic packed in a thermos.



Snack ideas

- Black bean dip with whole wheat pita
- Trail mix (variety of nuts, seeds, dried fruits, pretzels)
- Soy/coconut yogurt
- Popcorn with melted vegan margarine/olive oil with nutritional yeast as flavouring
- Apple slices and nut butter with chia or flax seeds sprinkled on top
- Oatmeal date balls



Recipes

Pumpkin Maple Glazed Vegan Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup vegan margarine
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup unsweetened pure pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp maple extract
- ½ cup icing sugar



Icing:

- ½ cup icing sugar
- ⅛ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp warm water

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine flour, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl. Set aside.
2. Mix vegan margarine with sugars in a large bowl. Mix in pumpkin puree and vanilla until blended. Gradually add in flour mixture; mix until just blended. Add cinnamon and maple extract. Drop by tablespoons on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake 8 minutes or until edges are golden. Cool cookies for 2 minutes on wire rack.
4. To prepare the icing, combine icing sugar and cinnamon. Stir in warm water until completely smooth. Drizzle over cooled cookies.

Serving Size: 1 cookie

Nutrition Facts

Calories	70 kcal
Calories from Fat	30 kcal
Total Fat	3.5 g
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	9 g

Vegan Date Energy Balls

Ingredients:

½ cup medjool dates	1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ cup raisins	3 tbsp shredded coconut
1 tbsp nut butter	2 tbsp chia seeds or ground flax seed
½ cup rolled oats	1 tbsp brown rice or agave syrup

Directions:

1. Combine everything in a food processor and combine until smooth.
2. Form into balls and refrigerate for 1 hour. Enjoy!

Serving Size: 2 Energy Balls

Nutrition Facts

Calories	63 kcal
Calories from Fat	13 kcal
Total Fat	1.5 g
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	13 g

Peanut Butter Chocolate Smoothie

Ingredients:

125 ml unsweetened soy milk	1 tsp honey
1 tbsp peanut butter	1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
¾ medium frozen banana	

Directions:

Place everything into blender and blend on medium-high until smooth.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Nutrition Facts

Calories	249 kcal
Calories from Fat	100 kcal
Total Fat	11 g
Protein	9 g
Carbohydrate	35 g

Veggie Burger Classic Sliders

Ingredients:

- 1 can black beans, drained
- ½ cup onion
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cup of mushrooms
- ½ cup celery
- ½ cup green pepper
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1 tbsp mustard
- 1 tsp liquid smoke
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 3 tsp Montreal steak seasoning
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- 2 tsp canola oil, plus 4 tbsp canola oil



Directions:

1. Heat 2 teaspoons of oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Fry the onion, garlic, mushrooms, celery, and green pepper until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Transfer to a food processor and pulse with beans, ketchup, mustard, liquid smoke, soy sauce, and spices until well combined but still chunky. Add bread crumbs and walnuts then pulse until combined.
3. Form mixture into golf ball size then flatten into patties.
4. Heat 4 tbsp of canola oil over medium-high heat. Fry patties 2 to 3 minutes per side until heated through.
5. Enjoy on a whole wheat hamburger bun with your choice of toppings including: lettuce, pickles, and tomatoes.

Serving Size: 1 Patty

Nutrition Facts

Calories	94 kcal
Calories from Fat	53 kcal
Total Fat	6 g
Protein	2.5 g
Carbohydrate	8 g

Vegan cookbooks

Plant-Powered Families: Over 100 Kid-Tested, Whole-Foods Vegan Recipes.

By Dreena Burton, BenBella Books 2015

Vegan Lunch Box: 130 Amazing, Animal-Free Lunches Kids and Grown-Ups Will Love!

By Jennifer McCann, Da Capo Press 2008

The Plantiful Table: Easy From-the-Earth Recipes for the Whole Family

By Andrea Duclos, The Experiment 2015

But My Family Would Never Eat Vegan! 125 Recipes to Win Everyone Over

By Kristy Turner, The Experiment 2016

The Oh She Glows Cookbook

By Angela Liddon, Penguin Books 2014

Useful websites

Dietitians of Canada

www.dietitians.ca

The Vegetarian Resource Group

www.vrg.org

ChooseVeg

www.chooseveg.ca

The Vegan Society

www.vegansociety.com

Vegetarian and Vegan Diets

www.eatrightontario.ca/en/

Vegetarian Nutrition

www.vegetariannutrition.net/

Dietitian's comments:
