

Calcium

There are many plant-based sources of calcium. The good news for vegans is that, due to how the mineral is absorbed, vegetables can be a better source of calcium than dairy.

Our top tip for reaching your daily 'kale-cium' intake is to include portions of green and leafy vegetables in your diet. Calcium can also be found in fortified foods like some plant milks and tofu, oranges and dried fruits.

Vitamin D helps our body to absorb and retain calcium. Therefore, a partnership of sufficient vitamin D and calcium is important in maintaining healthy bones. As well as getting healthy sun exposure, vitamin D is added to foods such as fortified soymilk, juice and breakfast cereals.

Vitamin B12

All vegans need to ensure they are getting sufficient B12. Everyone over the age of 50 (whether vegan or not) requires reliable sources of vitamin B12 from fortified foods or supplements – so vegans, as usual, are just getting ahead of the game. The only reliable animal-free sources of vitamin B12 are fortified foods and B12 supplements. Vitamin B12, whether in supplements, fortified foods, or animal products, comes through micro-organisms.



Look for B12-fortified foods such as plant milks, spreads, cereals and nutritional yeast (the latter is much more appetising than it sounds). The Vegan Society's Veg1 supplement has been specifically formulated for vegans, and contains your Recommended Daily Allowance of vitamin B12.

Iron

It's straightforward to obtain enough iron when you eat a rainbow of vegetables, fruits and other whole plant foods each day. In fact, research shows that a vegan's iron intake is, on average, similar to or higher than those of non-vegans, and often higher than the Recommended Daily Allowance.

Good vegan sources of iron include beans, legumes, green vegetables, nuts and seeds. For optimal absorption, try to eat these foods alongside foods rich in vitamin C. This can be as easy as drinking a glass of fruit juice with your meal.



Exploring a vegan lifestyle is a very positive step, not just for your health, but also for the animals and the environment. To sign up for our 30-Day Vegan Pledge, and to find more information on healthy vegan living, go to vegansociety.com

Plant-based nutrition

Healthy vegan living for everyone



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The British Dietetic Association agree that vegan diets can support healthy living at every age and life-stage

Whatever your reasons for exploring veganism, you'll be glad to hear that a plant-based diet can contain all the essential nutrients for health, growth and development. People who adopt a vegan diet tend to up their intake of fruit and vegetables, as well as eating food higher in fibre and lower in saturated fats. It's likely that you will be steered towards the healthier options without even trying.

Vegans can experience many health benefits which come along with the lifestyle, such as a lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity. A plant-based diet can also help to prevent several forms of cancer.

Many athletes are testament to the benefits of a vegan diet. Plant-based athletes excel in fields from endurance running to weightlifting, and find that all their nutritional needs are met.

It's good practice for everyone, not just vegans, to pay attention to what they're eating. With a few dietary changes, you could begin to feel better than ever before, safe in the knowledge that you are making significant steps towards a healthy, sustainable and compassionate life.

Protein

Protein is very easily accessible on a vegan diet, particularly if you regularly eat a variety of plant foods. In reality, most UK diets contain more protein than is optimal for good health. By cutting out animal products, vegans avoid consuming too much protein, and with a bit of planning have no trouble meeting daily requirements.



While protein can be found in vegetables such as broccoli and spinach, foods with higher amounts of protein include pulses, nuts, seeds and grains. Adding extra protein to a meal can be as easy (and tasty) as including a handful of nuts or some beans or lentils in a pasta dish, or adding tofu pieces, cashew nuts or pumpkin seeds to a stir fry.



Healthy fats

A plant-based diet tends to be naturally lower in fat than average diets, with vegans reporting significantly lower cholesterol levels than both vegetarians and omnivores. However, not all fats are bad – and the beneficial fats can be accessed on a vegan diet.

Good sources of Omega 3 fats are the oils of some nuts and seeds such as flax, mustard, hemp, rapeseed and walnuts. Making rapeseed (canola) oil your go-to kitchen oil is a cheap and easy way to include good fats in your diet. Why not also try walnuts on your breakfast cereal, or ground flax seeds in baking?

Try to avoid processed trans fats often found in fast food, fried food and many baked goods. Healthier sources of fats include nut butters and avocados – a perfect reason to find a good guacamole recipe.



A balanced vegan diet contains all of the essential nutrients for optimum health

