

Guide for **vegan** **prisoners**

What is veganism?

Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.

This booklet

If you are a vegan prisoner (or are the friend or relative of a vegan prisoner), this booklet will provide you with useful information about meeting the needs of vegans in prison. If you flip this booklet over, you will find helpful information for prison staff, including nutrition guidance.

In this section of the booklet you will find information on:

- **Your rights as a vegan prisoner**
- **How to buy or request vegan products**
- **How to resolve grievances**

If you would like to request further copies of this booklet you can do so by contacting The Vegan Society:

Telephone: 0121 523 1730

Address: Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street, Birmingham, B18 6HJ

Email: campaigns@vegansociety.com

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This booklet is for information and general guidance only. The information provided is not, and should not be considered, legal advice.

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Your rights as a vegan

Human rights

Vegans attract protection under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention). This right is given effect in the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Human Rights Act also places a duty on public bodies not to act in a way that contravenes your rights under the Convention.

The Equality Act 2010

Veganism is a protected characteristic for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Prison policies, managers and staff are obliged to give due regard to the needs of vegans and take all reasonable steps to accommodate their needs.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a Public Sector Equality Duty on public bodies. This duty requires prisons to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Diet

As a vegan prisoner, you should not be given any food containing animal products. You have a right to vegan food which contains all the nutrients needed to maintain good health. Information on how to provide this is in the back of this booklet, and The Vegan Society can provide further support on good catering practices.

Supplements

Every vegan needs to ensure that their diet includes appropriate supplementation. The Vegan Society markets a supplement called VEG 1 which includes vitamin D, vitamin B12, iodine and selenium. It is an economical option designed for vegans. We recommend that vegan prisoners are able to obtain an appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement like VEG 1 as a free issue.

Dress

You should not be given any clothes made from animal materials, including leather, suede, wool, silk or fur. If required, prison staff should source vegan work boots for you.

Toiletries

You should be given access to vegan toiletries.

Work

You should not be expected to take part in any work which compromises your vegan beliefs. This includes working on prison farms and handling or preparing non-vegan ingredients in a prison kitchen. Alternative work should be offered.

Medication

Currently all medication is required to be tested on nonhuman animals by UK law. However, the definition of veganism includes the tenet 'as far as is practical and possible'. The Vegan Society does not recommend that vegans abstain from taking prescribed medications.

How to buy/request vegan products

Canteen sheets are usually issued on a weekly basis in order for prisoners to order food, toiletries and other requirements. You will be informed about the amount you are permitted to spend.

Prison Retail should make every effort to stock food, toiletries and other items for which there is a demand. To ensure equal opportunities, they also need to cater for their vegan population even if they are in the minority.

The National Product List contains a list of products from which the local Prison Retail Team chooses products they would like to stock. You can request items which are not on your local canteen sheets but are on the full National Product List.

Most prisons have prisoner representatives who speak with other prisoners on the wing and recommend what is stocked on the local canteen sheets, so your first port of call might be to find out who they are and ask to see the full canteen listing to discuss your requirements being added.

If there is a product you would like to buy but which is not on the National Product List, you should speak to your Diversity Manager or Residential Governor. They may be able to add companies such as Amazon and Holland and Barrett to their facilities list. Once this has been arranged you can then purchase your requirements via a cash disbursement from your prisoners' monies.

Resolving grievances

If you have a grievance there are various ways of trying to resolve the issue, as outlined below.

Informal resolution

First, try to resolve the problem by speaking to a relevant member of the staff. You can speak with one of the Officers or ask to speak with the Health or Catering Manager or someone from the Local Independent Monitoring Board.

If you are still not satisfied, you can make a formal complaint by filling out a complaint form.

When using the prison complaints process it's a good idea to keep details of dates, times, who was present and whom you spoke with. If you need to raise an issue relating to vegan food provision or your nutrition, keeping a diary of your food consumption will be useful.

Complaint forms

Complaint forms (COMP1) are freely available and should be used for general complaints when informal discussions have failed. You should receive a reply usually within five days of submission.

Complaints from vegans must be taken seriously.

If you are not happy with the response to your complaint you can appeal using form COMP1A. Your appeal must be made within seven days of receiving the first response. Your appeal will be dealt with at a higher level, and you should receive a response within five working days.

If your complaint is about discrimination you need to fill in a discrimination incident reporting form. This form should also be freely available.

If your complaint is of a sensitive or confidential nature, you can access the 'confidential access procedure'. This procedure is not meant to be used in place of the general complaints process. Under the confidential access procedure complaints can be sent to the Prison Governor, the Prison Group Director or the Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board.

External resolution

If you do not receive a reply to your complaint within six weeks or if, after completing all stages of the internal complaints process, you are still not

happy with the response, you can escalate your case to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman within three months of receiving a response to the final stage of your complaint.

**The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Third Floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU**

Support

You can also contact the Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS). PAS has a dedicated advice line and helps prisoners who complain about their treatment in prison. Look for the PAS Self-Help Toolkits in the prison library.

**Prisoners' Advice Service
PO Box 46199
London
EC1M 4XA**

Tel: 020 7253 3323

You can also contact
The Vegan Society:

**The Vegan Society
Rights and Advocacy
Donald Watson House
21 Hylton Street
Birmingham
B18 6HJ**

Meeting the
needs of your
vegan
prisoners

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This booklet

If you work in a prison, this booklet will provide you with practical information to help you to meet the needs of your vegan prisoners. At the back of this booklet you will find advice for vegan prisoners.

In this section of the booklet you will find:

- **Information on the rights of vegan prisoners**
- **Nutritional advice on how to meet your vegan prisoners' dietary requirements**
- **Catering tips and benefits**
- **Ingredients to avoid**

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The rights of vegan prisoners

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Diet

A healthy vegan diet contains plenty of vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, wholegrains and legumes, like kidney beans, chickpeas and red split lentils. Vegans do not eat any product which derives from an animal. Vegans should not be given any food containing animal products and must be given access to food which contains all the nutrients needed to maintain good health.

You can find information on vegan nutrition in the next few pages.

Supplements

A well-planned vegan diet includes appropriate supplementation. The Vegan Society markets a supplement called VEG 1 which includes vitamin D, vitamin B12, iodine and selenium. It is an economical option designed for vegans. We recommend that an appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement like VEG 1 is made available to vegan prisoners as a free issue.

Dress

All clothing supplied to prisoners should be made from non-animal materials. Vegans avoid wearing materials such as leather, suede, wool, silk or fur and should not be required to do so. Vendors such as *vegetarian-shoes.co.uk* sell vegan work boots.

Toiletries

Vegan prisoners should have access to appropriate toiletries. These products should not contain any ingredients of animal origin and should not have been tested on nonhuman animals. Contact The Vegan Society for information and support.

Work

Vegan prisoners should not be expected to work on prison farms. They should not be expected to handle or prepare non-vegan ingredients in a prison kitchen. Alternative work should be offered.

Medication

Currently all medication is required to be tested on nonhuman animals by UK law. However, the definition of veganism includes the tenet 'as far as is practical and possible'. The Vegan Society does not recommend that vegans abstain from taking prescribed medications.

Nutritional advice

Well-planned vegan diets can provide all the nutrients that our bodies need. If you are catering for people who exclude animal products from their diets, there are several nutritional considerations that need to be taken into account, including the roles of fortified foods and supplementation. Detailed information about vegan diets is available at vegansociety.com/nutrition.

Getting the balance right

The following table provides guidance about how to balance the different food groups based on the principles of the UK's Eatwell Guide:

FOOD GROUP	SUGGESTED INTAKE	COMMENTS
Fruit and vegetables (fresh, tinned, frozen or dried), including orange varieties and leafy greens	At least five 80g portions per day (30g for dried fruit)	Ensure meals contain a vitamin C source, such as bell pepper, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, pineapple, lime juice, lemon juice and tomatoes. This boosts absorption of iron from plant foods. Offer rich sources of carotenoids every day, such as sweet potato, carrots, spinach and dried apricots. Offer a good source of vitamin K daily, such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, spinach or spring onions.
Starchy foods – ideally higher fibre choices, such as oats, wheat biscuits, wholewheat pasta, wholemeal chapatti, wholemeal bread, brown rice and sweet potato	Every meal	Some breakfast cereals are not suitable for vegans because they are fortified with vitamin D3 from sheep's wool. Wholemeal bread is a good source of zinc.
Protein-rich foods, such as kidney beans, broad beans, butter beans, chickpeas, falafel, garden peas, green lentils, red split lentils, tofu, soya mince and other soya products, peanuts, peanut butter and cashew nuts	Every meal	Tend to contain good amounts of iron and zinc too.

<p>Healthy fats, including nuts and seeds, especially those rich in omega-3 fat, such as walnuts</p>	<p>Every meal, including a rich daily source of omega-3 fat, e.g. six walnut halves (a small handful /20g)</p>	<p>Vegan menus should feature walnuts. They should also feature plenty of meals cooked using vegetable (rapeseed) oil, which can also make a useful contribution to daily intakes of omega-3 fat. The following foods can be included in meals as a healthy fat source: vegan margarine, sunflower seeds, peanuts, peanut butter, cashew nuts, almonds, sesame seeds, olives and avocado.</p>
<p>Calcium-rich foods, such as fortified alternatives to milk and yoghurt</p>	<p>Two 250ml cartons of fortified soya milk daily</p>	<p>An adequate intake of soya milk fortified with calcium and iodine can help vegans to hit their targets for these nutrients. However, it does not provide the amount of vitamin B12 recommended in Vegan Society guidance. This is one reason why it is important that an appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement like VEG 1 is made available to vegan prisoners as a free issue.</p>

Nutrients that deserve special attention

It's important to provide a daily diet that contains good sources of iron, such as lentils, chickpeas, garden peas, kidney beans, tofu, cashew nuts, raisins, sultanas, dried apricots, cocoa powder, fortified breakfast cereal and wholegrain products like wholemeal bread. Iron-rich food should be combined with a source of vitamin C to optimise absorption (see 'Fruit and vegetables' in table above for examples).

Every vegan needs to ensure that they get enough vitamin D, vitamin B12, iodine and selenium. This is why we recommend that an appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement like VEG 1 is made available to vegan prisoners as a free issue.

Benefits of vegan-friendly catering

- Vegan options can be enjoyed by most people:
 - Vegans, vegetarians and people who eat meat and fish
 - Those trying to reduce their consumption of animal products
 - People with allergies to milk and/or eggs if free from these allergens
 - Vegan meals may be acceptable to people with certain religious requirements – this should be discussed on an individual basis
- Research has associated vegan diets with the lowest emissions of carbon dioxide – a strong vegan offering helps to make your catering service sustainable
- It's easy to produce tasty meals that are rich in fibre and low in cholesterol-raising saturated fat, and provide multiple servings of fruit and vegetables.

Top tips for caterers

- Work with your supplier to make your breakfast offering as varied as possible, e.g. oats, vegan fortified breakfast cereals like wheat biscuits.
- Ensure that your service offers a variety of balanced vegan meals, including protein-rich foods, e.g. curries containing lentils or chickpeas, sandwiches including vegan margarine and houmous or spreads made using butterbeans or lentils, stir-fries with tofu or cashew nuts, jacket potatoes with baked beans or soya mince chilli.
- Prepare most meals from scratch, incorporating vegetable (rapeseed) oil and walnuts daily for essential omega-3 fat.
- Ensure that VEG 1 or another appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement is made available to your vegan prisoners as a free issue.
- Vegan menus should be planned well, so that it is not necessary to provide a weekly pack of extra food supplies.
- Strive to avoid cross-contamination from non-vegan products as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Consider making vegan options available to everyone because they can be enjoyed by most people, helping them to eat more sustainably, hit their fibre and 5-a-day targets, and limit saturated fat.
- You can keep your menu simple by serving vegan options as standard, e.g. make a vegetable soup without dairy, create desserts without using dairy and eggs such as fruit crumbles, flapjacks and sponge puddings, which can be served with custard made using traditional custard powder and soya milk.
- Staff training about veganism and vegan diets is recommended and you can check out vegansociety.com/cateringforeveryone for more information about meeting vegan needs in prison.

Ingredients to avoid

Vegans don't eat anything that comes from an animal. This includes:

- **Meat, including chicken, fish or any kind of shellfish**
- **Milk from any animal, or products derived from milk such as cheese, yoghurt and cream**
- **Eggs, or products containing eggs**
- **Honey, gelatine or beeswax**

Here is a non-exhaustive list of common ingredients to avoid:

Albumen	Keratin	Shellac
Carmine or cochineal	Lactose	Tallow
Casein	Lanolin	Whey
Gelatine	Propolis	E901, E120, E441, E913, E904
Guanine	Royal jelly	

Please note that if a product carries a label warning that it 'may contain' an animal allergen like shellfish, fish, milk, eggs or molluscs, this does not prevent it from being considered a vegan product.

Vegan Trademark

If you are unsure whether a product is suitable for vegans, check if it carries the Vegan Trademark. If not, get in touch with the manufacturer for the most reliable and up to date information.



Catering for vegan prisoners — summary

- Provide a variety of balanced vegan meals, so that it is not necessary to provide a weekly pack of extra food supplies
- Provide two 250ml cartons of fortified soya milk daily
- Provide a rich source of omega-3 fat daily – provide walnuts and prepare meals using vegetable (rapeseed) oil
- Ensure that VEG 1 or another appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement is made available to vegan prisoners as a free issue

Contact The Vegan Society for more information and guidance on 0121 523 1730