**Why is zinc important?**

Our bodies use zinc for lots of different functions. This nutrient is used for fighting infections, speeding up chemical reactions and helping our immune system function.

A zinc deficiency could lead to hair loss, more infections and poor wound healing.

**How much zinc do you need?**

In the UK, the recommended daily zinc intake for adults is 7 mg for women and 9.5 mg for men.¹ These recommendations assume that zinc losses are higher in men after considering losses via skin, hair, semen and menstruation.

**How can you get enough zinc?**

Zinc supplements are available, however it is possible to get all the zinc you need from eating a varied and balanced vegan diet. Vegan sources of zinc include beans, wholemeal bread and lentils.

The infographic on page two shows examples of vegan foods high in zinc. Most of these foods also provide protein and iron too²,³.

**Zinc absorption**

Wholemeal bread is a useful source of zinc because leavening increases the body’s ability to absorb zinc.⁴ Sprouting beans, chickpeas and lentils may also help.⁵ Food Standards Agency advise to follow safe food hygiene practices when sprouting at home to avoid contaminated seeds that can lead to foodborne illnesses.

**Zinc tip to take away**

Ensure that you make zinc-rich choices throughout the day.
ZINC

MEAL PLANNING TIP: choose zinc-rich foods throughout the day

- FIRM TOFU 100g (¼ dinner plate) Zinc content 1.6mg
- MEDIUM-SLICED WHOLEMEAL BREAD (2 slices) Zinc content 1.3mg
- CASHEW NUTS 30g (handful) Zinc content 1.8mg
- COOKED QUINOA 150g (¼ dinner plate) Zinc content 1.6mg
- DRIED RED SPLIT LENTILS 50g (⅓ cup) Zinc content 1.7mg
- PUMPKIN SEEDS 30g (¼ cup) Zinc content 2.0mg
- FROZEN GARDEN PEAS 150g (½ cup) Zinc content 1.2mg
- SHELL ED HEMP SEEDS 30g (¼ cup) Zinc content 3.0mg
- CANNED KIDNEY BEANS 150g (½ can) Zinc content 1.4mg
- CANNED CHICKPEAS 150g (½ can) Zinc content 1.7mg

These are general guidelines about nutrition. If you have concerns about your diet, please talk to your doctor about seeing a dietitian.

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Further information

You might be interested to check out the following webpages at www.vegansociety.com:

- **Nutrition overview**
- **Life stages**, including pregnancy, breastfeeding and different age groups

References