



Meat-Free May

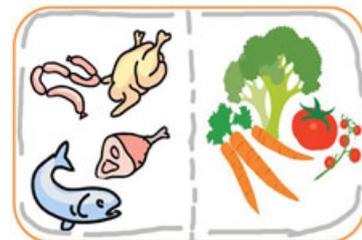
People choose to be vegetarian for a variety of reasons ranging from religious to ethnic considerations. Nowadays, keeping to a healthier diet is gaining popularity in Singapore. Some vegetarians simply want to live a healthier life while others respond to the call to 'Go green'.

If you are curious about being a vegetarian or changing your dietary habits in that regard, here are some sound bites of advice for you.

<i>Facts Box</i>	
A Suggested 1-Day Meal Plan for a Vegetarian	
Breakfast:	
Strawberries and Raisins	
1 medium banana	
Lunch:	
2 Vegetarian Popiah	
1 serving of Salad with Nuts and Beans	
1 cup of fresh Orange Juice	
Dinner:	
1 bowl of Brown Rice	
1 mug of cooked Mixed Vegetables	
1 bowl of ABC soup (Carrot, Potato, Onion)	
1 Kiwi	
Snacks:	
4 plain biscuits	
Servings of Almonds, Raisins, Cherry Tomatoes	

1. Define what you mean by being a vegetarian.

There are many types of vegetarians. The strictest form can be found in vegans, who eschew any kind of animal products, including eggs and butters. Lacto-vegetarians eat food of plant and dairy origins, while Lacto-ovo vegetarians consume eggs and dairy products.



Pesco-vegetarians on the other hand add fish to their plant-based diet. * Deciding on the type of vegetarian diet to adopt is a personal decision that depends on your preference, tastes and your views on the proper role of animals and the environment. Becoming a vegetarian is not an easy feat, so think it over and choose the one that fits your lifestyle most - make your daily life a bit different with some measure of motivation.

**Information from Health Promotion Board Website*

2. Start with small steps

Rome wasn't built in a day; for most people, a full transition cannot be achieved in a single day. A gradual transition may work better; and you need not give up meat all at once. Start with an abstinence from red meat since red meat is unhealthy in that over-consumption may lead to high cholesterol levels. Subsequently, you can follow on your success with red meat to omit chicken and seafood from your diet. Bit by bit, you will realise that meat might not be an absolute necessity for every meal.



3. Go for great balance and gain enough nutrition

As different types of vegetarians have different eating styles, their nutrition challenges vary. Vegetarian diets tend to be short on iron, calcium and vitamin B12. Here we provide a reference for plant sources of these key nutrients.

Nutrient	Major Vegetarian Sources
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Iron	Green leafy vegetables, lentils, legumes, iron fortified food and dried fruit
Vitamin B12	Tempeh(fermented Soybean Cake), dairy products, eggs, fortified products (e.g. cereals)
Calcium	Dairy products, green leafy vegetables, calcium-fortified products such as soybean milk, water, juice, cereal, bread, biscuits, tofu made with calcium salts
Zinc	Wholegrain, nuts and legumes

**Information credited to [Health Promotion Board Website](#)*

As a vegetarian, a well-balanced diet is also very important and you should watch out for nutritional shortfalls. Getting all the nutrition we need requires eating a variety of foods. The key to a healthy vegetarian lifestyle is to know what foods give you the nutrition that most people get from animal sources.

A diet without meat can still be exciting by trying out different cuisine that includes soy-based products like tofu, delicious desserts made of dried beans, nuts and seeds, as well as Indian vegetarian meals with lentils and dried whole legumes and so on. Alternatively, you can try to DIY your own meal or simply enjoy it in a vegetarian restaurant. Either way, let the change start today!

**Please note this article is for informational purposes and should only be used as a guide. The article is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional or to advocate vegetarianism. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information with the general public.*

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