

Advice On A Well-Balanced Vegetarian Diet

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Many people are under the impression that a vegetarian diet is an incomplete diet in terms of nutrition. It is true that meats are not consumed; however, the nutrients found in meats can also be found in many non-meat food items. Read this article to learn more about well-balanced vegetarian diets.

Iron is commonly associated with red meat. Since vegetarians do not eat red meat, iron must be obtained from other sources. Many leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and collard greens, are rich in iron. Tofu and beans also have a high iron content. You can improve your body's absorption of this type of iron by combining these foods with foods rich in vitamin C.

Being a vegetarian does not mean that you necessarily have to give up milk and eggs. In fact, milk and eggs are excellent sources of high-quality protein, so you should consider including those in your vegetarian diet.

Whole grains are loaded with healthy fiber and all kinds of nutrients. Different grains are rich in different vitamins and minerals. When you eat a variety of whole grains, you ensure yourself of getting a well-round amount of nutrients. Do not confuse whole grains with refined grains. Highly processed, refined grains have the nutrients stripped away when the outer and inner parts of the grain were removed during processing. These do not offer the same amount of nutrients as whole grains.

A healthy diet includes complete proteins, meaning that the proteins must have the essential amino acids. Animal-derived proteins are complete. However, plant-derived proteins may be missing an amino acid. Therefore, it is important to eat a variety of legumes, beans, grains and nuts in order to get all of the essential amino acid in your diet.

B-12 is mostly found in meat, fish and dairy products. If you are not consuming enough dairy products, you may need to take a B-12 supplement to ensure that you will not be deficient in this vitamin.

Avoid consuming dairy products with a high-fat content as your main source of protein. The excess fat can lead to undesired weight gain. Instead, consider using low-fat or skim milk. Do not forget that there are non-dairy sources of protein, such as nuts, legumes, tofu and beans.

Avoid highly processed foods which are loaded with salts and artificial ingredients. You may be tempted to buy a vegetarian meal from your market's frozen section because it is convenient, but that is not a healthy option. Structure your diet around whole foods instead. Just because a pre-packaged food says that it is vegetarian, it does not necessarily mean that it is healthy. It can be loaded with empty calories from fats, with excess sodium and ingredients that you cannot even pronounce. These are food choices that you should avoid.

Eating a well-balance, vegetarian diet takes knowledge and planning. Learn all about the non-meat options and what nutrients are provided by each type of food. You will find that you can exclude meat from your diet without depriving yourself of proper nutrition.