

# Vegan nutritional support

Information for patients and carers



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# Nutrition support with a vegan diet

A vegan diet is based on foods derived from plants, including vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, nuts, seeds, and fruits. A vegan diet contains no animal products, no honey, dairy or eggs, and means avoiding animal use as much as possible.

The diet is often more expensive, and a little more effort is required to plan the diet to ensure it is well balanced.



A vegan diet should incorporate each of the following food groups

Protein alternatives: beans, nuts, seeds, and non-dairy, but calcium rich products (2-3 portions per day)

Carbohydrates: oat, rice, cereal, bread or pasta (3 portions per day)

Fruits and vegetables: strawberries, apples, carrots, lettuce (5 portions per day).

## Specific nutrients to consider

It is important to ensure particular attention is paid to certain nutrients when following a vegan diet as these can often be under consumed

### Protein:

Plant-based sources of protein are:

- Lentils
- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Seeds
- Tofu
- Nuts and nut butters (e.g. peanut butter).

Meat substitutes like vegetarian burgers, soya sausages and other meat alternatives can be useful for those adapting to a plant-based diet and can provide a source of protein.

### Calcium:

Calcium can be obtained from fortified plant-based dairy alternatives:

- Dried fruit e.g., figs
- Nuts
- Leafy green vegetables
- Red kidney beans
- Sesame seeds
- Tahini
- Tofu

Although legumes and leafy green vegetables contain reasonable amounts of calcium, natural organic compounds called phytates and oxalates are present, which reduce the absorption of calcium. It may be worth considering taking a supplement of calcium.

## Vitamin D:

Plant-based sources of vitamin D:

- Sun-exposed mushrooms
- Fortified foods such as vegetable spreads, breakfast cereals and plant-based dairy alternatives.

As it's difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone, everyone should consider taking a daily supplement, especially between the months of September and April.

## Omega3 fatty acid:

Plant sources of omega 3 include:

- Walnuts
- Flax (linseed)
- Hemp seeds
- Chia seeds
- Soya beans.

- Oils such as hemp, rapeseed and flaxseed oil

These oils are preferable to corn/sunflower oils.

## Vitamin B12:

Most people get vitamin B12 from eating animal products. If you are eliminating all animal derived foods, the only reliable sources of vitamin B12 are fortified foods such as:

- Breakfast cereals
- Yeast extracts

- Soya yogurts
- Non-dairy milks. These oils are preferable to corn/sunflower oils.

These need to be taken at least twice a day or take supplements daily.

## Iron:

Plant sources of iron include:

- Dried fruits
- Wholegrains
- Nuts
- Green leafy vegetables
- Seeds
- Pulses.

The form of iron in plant foods is absorbed far less efficiently compared to iron from animal derived sources such as meat and eggs. Ensure to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C to help the iron to be absorbed e.g. citrus fruits, strawberries, green leafy vegetables and peppers.

## Zinc:

Plant sources of zinc include:

- Fermented soya
- Beans (soak dried beans then rinse before cooking to increase zinc absorption)
- Wholegrains
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Fortified breakfast cereals.

Selenium: Plant sources of selenium include:

- Grains
- Seeds
- Buts.

Many benefits can be derived from a vegan diet, however as diet rich in wholefoods (which

means has been processed or refined as little as possible), can be problematic for people with small appetites. This is because many plant-based foods and alternatives are naturally lower in calories and provide less protein in a serving and higher in fibre, which is more filling. Therefore, it is best if you boost the content and enrich your foods.

## The vegan diet when you have a poor appetite

Many foods can be fortified to make them more nourishing, especially if you can only manage small quantities. Use the following ideas to add extra nourishment to your meals and snacks:

- Add grated/chopped nuts or dried fruit into sauces or yoghurts
- Serve fresh or tinned fruit with soya/oat yoghurt, cream, or ice cream
- Add oat/soya cream, crème fraiche or syrups to dairy-free ice cream or vegan sorbet
- Add extra peanut/nut butter or ground nuts and seeds such as walnuts, chia seeds and linseed to smoothies
- Aim to have a pint of fortified plant-based milk every day. Use this in cereals, soups, sauces and puddings.
- Blend soaked cashew nuts or silken tofu with nutritional yeast to make protein rich sauces
- Add protein powder, e.g., soya, pea, rice, to thicken soup, sauces and stews
- Add tofu and tinned butter beans to soup, sauces and stews
- Serve hummus or nut butters with bread, crackers, or pitta slices
- Vegan alternatives such as cheese, cream and crème fraiche can be used to boost energy. (e.g. oat cream with soya rice pudding, vegan cheese with soya bolognese, vegan spread with jacket potato and beans, oat cream and dried fruit to breakfast cereal)
- Add dairy free spread to vegetables and vegan mayonnaise to sandwiches
- Add oil, spread or vegan pesto to polenta, mashed potatoes, couscous and vegetables

- Use vegan mayonnaise and dressings generously on salads. Additionally, top with chopped nuts and seeds.

## Non-dairy milk:

There is a wide range of dairy alternative milks available both fresh and long life. They vary in nutritional content and in taste. Some are sweetened so will be more nourishing. Remember to check the calcium content as not all brands are fortified. Organic and budget brands are not usually fortified with micronutrients.

Per 100 ml	Whole milk/cow	Oat milk	Soya milk / unsweetened	Soya milk / unsweetened	Rice milk	Coconut milk	Almond milk
Energy/kcal	66	53	19	42	47	28	13
Protein/(g)	3.5	1.2	2.0	3.0	0.1	0.3	<0.5

Protein is essential for maintaining muscle mass and strength, has an important role in the process of healing and in your immune system. Here are some suggestions on how to achieve this.

## Fortified plant-based milk

Approximately 570kcal, 45g protein (varies depending on milk and protein powder chosen)

### Ingredients

- 2 scoops of almond protein powder (usually approximately 60g)
- 600ml or 1 pint soya milk

### Directions

1. Whisk the powder into the milk until dissolved then store in the fridge and use throughout the day in foods and drinks where possible.



### 10g protein equals

- 350ml soya milk
- 45g peanuts
- 50g almonds, linseeds sunflower seeds
- 70g edamame beans
- 150g silken tofu
- 2 large slices seeded, mixed grain bread
- 50g dried/140g cooked red lentils
- 130g chickpeas, cannellini beans
- 150g canned kidney beans

### 20g protein equals

- 40g peanut butter
- 50g soya bean, black bean, and edamame bean pasta
- 100g meat-free mince (soya, pea, and rice proteins)
- 150g firm tofu
- 180g Quorn vegan chicken style slices

Easy to use, store and keep foods which are long life:

- Rice, rice noodles, pasta, tinned spaghetti
- Dried or tinned beans, pulses, lentils, chickpeas, quinoa, couscous
- Vegetables – frozen or canned
- Fruit – frozen, canned fruit in syrup, dried fruit
- UHT or long-life plant-based milk
- Crackers, biscuits, oat cakes, soya custard and cupboard desserts
- Nut butters, marmalade, marmite, jam, powdered peanut butter
- Keep a small freezer store of plant-based sausages, casseroles, and soups



## A day's nourishing menu idea

Breakfast	Mid-morning	Lunch	Mid-afternoon	Evening meal	Supper
Cereal with oat milk, nuts and seeds.  A fruit smoothie with fortified milk and vegan ice-cream.	Rice cakes with peanut butter and sliced banana	Baked beans, mushrooms with nutritional yeast on toast with tomatoes	Soya yoghurt with chocolate chips and seeds	Soya mince lasagne made with oat milk white sauce	A creamy shake (see overleaf)

## Nourishing Homemade Drinks

Recipes can be made with either, fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables.

### Creamy Shake

Approximately 550kcal and 21g protein per serving (excluding topping)

### Ingredients

- 2 frozen ripe bananas (100g)
- 40g strawberries (or blueberries)
- 2-3 tsp (teaspoon) cocoa powder
- 2 tbsp (tablespoon) salted almond butter
- 2 tsp flaxseed or chia seed
- 250ml sweetened almond milk
- 1 tsp coconut sugar/cane sugar
- 1 big handful of spinach

### Directions

- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth
- If you prefer the taste of chocolate, add more cocoa powder and soy whipped cream.



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## Kale Smoothie

Approximately 300 kcal and 8g protein per serving

### Ingredients

- 1 medium ripe banana (50g)
- 1 65g cup frozen mixed berries (100g)
- 2 tsp flaxseed or chia seed
- 260g frozen or fresh kale
- 150ml 100% pomegranate juice
- 100ml pineapple juice

### Directions

- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, adding more water as needed
- Taste and adjust flavours as needed
- Add more bananas or some agave for added sweetness.



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## Strawberry Cream Shake

Approximately 300 kcal and 10g protein per serving

### Ingredients

- 250ml sweetened soya milk
- 100g fresh strawberries
- 3 frozen bananas
- 1 tbsp Nesquik or supermarket own brand milkshake powder

### Directions

- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, adding more water as needed
- Top with soy whipped cream.



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## Iced Coffee

Approximately 315 kcal and 20g protein per serving

### Ingredients

- 200ml/pint fortified plant-based milk
- 2 tsp instant coffee
- 1 scoop of vegan ice cream
- 2 tsp maple syrup

### Directions

- Dissolve the coffee in a little warmed milk, then add the rest of the milk, sugar and ice cream.
- Whisk until smooth
- Transfer to a glass, chill and serve.



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## Coconut Passion

Approximately 460 kcal and 16g protein per serving

### Ingredients

- 200ml oat milk
- 150g coconut yoghurt
- 100g tinned or fresh mango
- 2 passionfruit coulis
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 15g pea or soya protein powder

### Directions

- Add the oat milk, fruits, yoghurt, powder and vanilla in a blender
- Blend until completely smooth.
- Transfer to a glass, chill and serve..



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