

## Vegetarian? Who, Me?

Prepared by: Holly Murray, MEd, RD, Extension Educator, Area VII, Franklin County

### Lesson Objectives

- Define at least 3 different types of vegetarian diets
- Name at least 3 chronic diseases that may improve or be prevented with a vegetarian diet
- Name at least 6 nutrients to be aware of while following a vegetarian diet

### Getting Started

*Questions to ask your club members to set the stage for the lesson*

- What does it mean to you to be vegetarian?
- Have you ever thought about what you eat and how it can or cannot benefit your health?

### Demographics

- 3% of U.S. adults indicated they never eat meat, poultry and fish/seafood. They were classified as vegetarian. Of this group, one percent also never eat dairy, eggs, and honey, and were classified as vegan.
- Estimate there are approximately 6-8 million adult vegetarians in the United States.

### Reasons to be Vegetarian

- Religious
- Ethical
- Health
- Environmental
- Animal Welfare
- Economical

### Types of Vegetarians

- **Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian:** does not eat meat, fish or fowl. Eats dairy and egg products. Most popular.
- **Ovo Vegetarian:** does not eat meat, fish, fowl or dairy products. Eats egg products.
- **Lacto Vegetarian:** does not eat meat, fish, fowl or eggs. Eats dairy products.
- **Vegan:** does not eat any animal products including meat, fish, fowl, eggs, dairy, honey, etc. Most vegans do not use any animal products such as silk, leather, wool, etc. as well; having a REVERENCE FOR LIFE

## Health Benefits of Vegetarianism in Chronic Disease

- Cardiovascular - death from ischemic heart disease lower; vegetarian diets are not low in fat, but are lower in saturated fat, higher in fiber, and higher in antioxidant consumption
- Hypertension – Lower blood pressure; lower rates of hypertension
- Cancer – lower overall cancer rate; lower rates of prostate and colorectal cancers; higher intake of phytochemicals and isoflavones that have anticancer effects
- Diabetes – plant based diets reduce risk of type 2 diabetes; lower Body Mass Index (BMI) and higher fiber intake improved insulin sensitivity
- Obesity – lower BMI; lower animal fat intake; greater vegetable intake
- Kidney Disease – Plant foods have beneficial effect on kidney function than animal protein
- Diverticular Disease – lower risk due to high fiber and lower fat intakes;

## Nutrient Considerations for Vegetarians

- Protein – An assortment of plant foods throughout the day provides all essential amino acids.
  - Good sources of Protein: Beans, Tofu, Veggie burger or other meat substitutes, Soymilk, Peanut butter and nuts, Dairy products
- Iron – Plant foods contain only nonheme iron; vitamin C enhances iron absorption; calcium and dairy foods *decrease* iron absorption.
  - Good sources of Iron: Enriched bread and cereal, Whole wheat bread and other whole grains, Dried apricots, Figs, Prunes, Leafy green vegetables, Tomato juice, Beans, Nuts, Soybeans, Tofu
  - Good sources of Vitamin C: Melons, Citrus fruits, Pineapple, Strawberries, Kiwi, Broccoli, Peppers, Tomato
- Zinc – Important for a healthy immune system throughout life.
  - Good sources of Zinc: Soybeans and other beans, Whole grains (refined grains don't have it unless they are fortified) and foods like nuts, seeds, fortified ready-to-eat cereals, and nut and seed butters; Breads are better sources of zinc than crackers or muffins because yeast makes zinc more absorbable
- Calcium – Most people don't get enough unless they use fortified foods or supplements; adequate vitamin D and protein enhance calcium absorption.
  - Good sources of Calcium: Dairy products, Green leafy vegetables such as Bok choy, Broccoli, Chinese/ Napa cabbage, Collards, Kale, Okra, Turnip greens; Calcium fortified orange juice, Calcium-fortified soymilk and calcium-set tofu
- Vitamin D – may need supplement if insufficient sun exposure or intake of fortified foods.
  - Good sources of Vitamin D: Fortified cereals, Fortified soy milk, Fortified orange juice, Egg yolks, Cow's milk
- Vitamin B12 – no plant foods contain significant amounts.
  - Good sources of Vitamin B12: Fortified breakfast cereals and some brands of soymilk; Some brands of nutritional yeast are rich in vitamin B12 (Red Star Vegetarian Support Formula), Cow's milk, Eggs
- Vitamin A – preformed vitamin A only in animal foods.
  - Good sources of Vitamin A: Apricots, Cantaloupe, Mango, Pumpkin, Butternut squash, Sweet potatoes, Spinach, Carrots
- Omega 3 Fatty Acids – need other sources if not eating eggs.
  - Good sources of Omega 3 Fatty Acids: Flaxseeds and flaxseed oil, Canola oil, Soybeans and soybean oil, Tofu, Walnuts and walnut oil
- Iodine – inconsistent in plant products.
  - Good sources of Iodine: iodized salt, multivitamins containing iodine

## Vegetarian Food Groups

Whole Grains	6 or more servings per day
Legumes, Nuts, & Soyfoods	5 or more servings per day
Vegetables	4 or more servings per day
Fruits	2 or more servings per day
Fats	2 servings per day

### For Additional Information

- Seek out information from trusted sources
  - [www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)
  - [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)
- Cookbooks and recipes

## Vegetarian Tips

- Stock your pantry with the following vegetarian options:
  - Beans
  - Instant vegetable broth
  - Nuts and nut butters
  - Soyfoods
  - Vegetables
  - Whole grains
- Many foods can be made vegetarian and this can increase veggie intake and cut saturated fat and cholesterol intake.
  - Consider:
    - ✓ pasta primavera or pasta with marinara or pesto sauce
    - ✓ veggie pizza
    - ✓ vegetable lasagna
    - ✓ tofu-vegetable stir fry
    - ✓ vegetable lo mein
    - ✓ vegetable kabobs
    - ✓ bean burritos or tacos
- Build meals around protein sources that are naturally low in fat, such as beans, lentils, and rice, but don't overload meals with high fat cheeses to replace meat.

## Adapt Your Recipes to Go Vegetarian

- Substitute cooked or canned beans for meat in casseroles, stews, soups and chili.
- For grilling, cube and skewer firm tofu and vegetables.
- On pizza, hot sandwiches, sloppy joes and other dishes that typically call for meat, use soy-protein patties, bacon or sausages.
- Prepare pasta sauces, pizza, soups and stews as always, but skip the meat. Add more chopped vegetables and beans instead.

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