



A Guide to having an optimal Vegan diet

- **Zinc:** Vegan diets tend to be high in phytates which can bind to and reduce assimilation of zinc - zinc is important for a healthy immune system and for many other important metabolic processes.
- Find in: Soy products, whole grains, legumes, zinc-fortified foods and cereals.
- **Vitamin B12:** This vitamin is vital in neurotransmitter formation and supporting a healthy nervous system and DNA replication via the Methylation pathway and is found only in meat or fortified products such as yeast. Some can be derived from fermented foods but supplementation is recommended.
- **Calcium:** For bone health, optimal cellular function and pH buffering: Ensure you eat plenty of calcium fortified plant foods, cereals and soy and rice beverages. Calcium citrate is the more bioavailable form. Other Sources: Green leafy vegetables, tofu, tahini, activated almonds
- **Vitamin D:** Important in bone and hormone health, status of Vitamin D in vegans is reliant on exposure to the sun or supplementation via fortified foods from non-fish sources. Vegans probably need to take Vitamin D supplements as research is showing even omnivores can be Vit D deficient.
- **Polyunsaturated Fats (n-3):** Diets that exclude fish, eggs and sea vegetables lack EPA and DHA which are vital for brain, eye and cardiovascular health. A good source of DHA for vegans is in microalgae and brown algae (kelp) for EPA. Flaxseed oil, coconut oil, oil and Evening Primrose oil are all good alternative sources for Omega 3 however be mindful of maintaining the balance between Omega-6 (in seed oils) and Omega-3.
- **Iron:** Whilst there is non-heme iron in plant-based foods, it is not as bio-available/absorbable as heme iron (derived from meat). Ensuring you eat plenty of Vitamin C rich foods with your high-iron containing vegetables such as spinach and kale will assist in absorption. If you are feeling fatigued and display pale gums and conjunctiva, supplementing with Iron may be of help.
- **Protein:** This is vital for energy production, muscle integrity, brain function and all other metabolic processes that keep us functioning optimally. Please ensure you have a good quality plant based protein powder in a smoothie every day. (suggestions available)

Keep in mind, vitamin and mineral levels in foods are only as good as the soil they are grown in!

Healthy Eating!

References:

Craig, W, 2009, Health effects of vegan diets, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
<http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/89/5/1627S.full.pdf+html> Viewed 7/10/14