

# Eating Guidelines for Lacto-Ovo Vegetarians



## Information about a Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian Diet

- A lacto-ovo vegetarian eating pattern is based on grains, fruits and vegetables, legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils), seeds, nuts, dairy products and eggs. It excludes meat, fish and poultry or products containing these foods.
- A low fat lacto-ovo vegetarian eating pattern has many potential health benefits. They include lower rates of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer. Other benefits include lower blood cholesterol levels and a lower risk for gallstones and intestinal problems.
- This eating pattern can take some extra planning. Lacto-ovo vegetarians must make sure that enough nutrients like protein, iron, zinc and omega-3 fats are included.
- A well planned vegetarian diet can meet all of these needs. It is safe and healthy for pregnant and breastfeeding women, babies, children, teens and seniors.
- A variety of plant foods eaten during the day can provide enough protein to promote and maintain good health.

## Steps You Can Take

Follow *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) to make sure that your diet is healthy and includes all the key nutrients.

## Include vegetarian sources of:

### Protein

Protein is key in building and keeping muscles and red blood cells healthy. Protein supports growth throughout the life cycle. Good sources of protein include:

- Soy and soy products like tofu and fortified soy drinks.
- Meat alternatives like textured vegetable protein (TVP) and veggie burgers.
- Dried beans, peas and lentils like kidney, black and white beans, chickpeas and black-eyed peas and red, brown and green lentils.
- Grains, nuts, nut butters and seeds.
- Dairy products like low fat milk, cheese and yogurt.
- Eggs.

### Iron

Iron helps carry oxygen to different parts of the body. Iron can be better absorbed by including vitamin C rich foods like citrus fruits and juices, kiwi, mango, melons, potatoes, sweet peppers, broccoli and some green leafy vegetables with meals. Remember, vegetarians need about twice as much iron. Vegetarians should choose several iron-rich plant sources daily.

Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

Good sources of iron include:

- Soy and soy products like firm or extra firm tofu and fortified soy drinks.
- Meat alternatives like textured vegetable protein (TVP) and veggie burgers.
- Dried beans, peas and lentils like kidney, pinto and adzuki beans, chickpeas and black-eyed peas, and red, brown and green lentils.
- Fortified grain products, nuts and seeds like almonds and sesame seeds.
- Fruits like prunes, raisins and apricots and dark green vegetables like collards, okra and bok choy.
- Blackstrap molasses.

### Zinc

Zinc is needed for growth. Zinc helps the body to protect itself from disease and heal wounds. Good sources of zinc include:

- Soy and soy products like tofu and fortified soy drinks.
- Dried beans, peas and lentils.
- Nuts and seeds and their butters like peanuts and peanut butter, sesame seeds and their butter (tahini) and others like pecans, cashews, pumpkin and flax seed.
- Whole grains and fortified cereals.

### Linolenic acid (omega-3 fat)

Omega-3 fats are helpful in preventing heart disease and important for eye, nerve and brain development.

Good sources of omega-3 fats include:

- Oils like canola, flax seed, walnut and soybean.
- Ground flax seed.

- Soybeans, tofu and walnuts.

A lacto-ovo vegetarian diet includes dairy and eggs so nutrients such as calcium, vitamins B12 and D can easily be met by following Canada's Food Guide.

### Steps for Special Consideration

Pregnant and breastfeeding women should follow the food guide, choosing a variety of healthy foods. Special attention should be paid to include good sources of vitamin B12 daily, including dairy products and eggs. As well, a focus on omega-3 rich foods and iron rich foods is important. If you are pregnant talk to your doctor about a prenatal vitamin that includes iron and vitamin B12. All women thinking of becoming pregnant or are pregnant should take a multivitamin daily which includes 400 micrograms of folic acid, to help prevent birth defects.

People over the age of 50 need more calcium, vitamin D and B12. A greater focus on the foods that have these nutrients is needed. People over 50 should include three servings of milk and milk alternatives each day to help meet calcium needs. Canada's Food Guide states that people over 50 should take 400 IU of vitamin D from a supplement each day. They should also get vitamin B12 from fortified foods or a supplement. A daily multivitamin-mineral supplement will help meet these extra needs.

**Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)**

### **Additional Resources**

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

*The New Becoming Vegetarian: The Essential Guide to a Healthy Vegetarian Diet* by Vesanto Melina MS RD and Brenda Davis RD.

For nutrition answers, recipes, meal plans and vegetarian info visit:

The Vegetarian Resource Group at [. www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)

For hundreds of vegan and vegetarian recipes:

<http://vegweb.com/index.php?action=recipes>

These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.

**Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)**