

# VEGETARIAN EATING FOR MUMS

Vegetarian eating can provide our bodies with everything they need, even during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

It is important to follow a healthy eating plan to meet you and your baby's needs, especially for protein, iron and calcium.

How easy it is to meet these needs will depend on what type of vegetarian diet you follow (i.e. whether you include dairy products and eggs).

## What about iron?

During pregnancy iron is needed to make extra blood to carry oxygen around your body for the growth of your baby.

Eating too little iron can make you feel tired and lethargic, which can lead to anaemia (low iron stores).

When breastfeeding your needs are not as high unless your iron levels fell during pregnancy.

Even though there is plenty of iron in some plant foods it is not taken up (absorbed) by the body as easily as iron from animal foods.

## To meet your iron needs-

Include high iron foods like -

- ◆ wholemeal bread
- ◆ fortified breakfast cereals
- ◆ lentils, baked beans, kidney beans, soybeans
- ◆ eggs
- ◆ dried fruit, nuts, seeds, tahini
- ◆ peanut butter

Include a food rich in vitamin C at each main meal. This helps increase iron uptake.

**Avoid drinking tea (which contains tannin) with your meals or snacks as this can reduce iron uptake.**

- ◆ orange juice/ oranges
- ◆ berry fruits
- ◆ melons
- ◆ cabbage
- ◆ pineapple
- ◆ broccoli
- ◆ capsicum
- ◆ tomato

**Use the How well are you Eating? handout to check you are meeting all your nutritional needs.**

## What about calcium?

Calcium is needed for you and your baby's bones and teeth.

Not having enough calcium during pregnancy and breastfeeding may increase your risk of osteoporosis (thinning of bones) later in life.

## To meet your calcium needs-

Include 3-4 serves of dairy products every day. eg.

- ◆ 1 cup of milk, or fortified soy milk
- ◆ 200 g tub of yoghurt
- ◆ matchbox size piece of cheese (35 grams)

Small amounts of calcium can be obtained in dark green leafy vegetables, nuts (almonds), tofu, legumes and tahini paste.

A calcium tablet may be needed if you cannot consume that amount of food and drink.

**Your B12 levels need to be checked before you become pregnant if you have been a vegan for a period of years. Vegans must drink fortified soy milk such as So Good to obtain vitamin B12.**

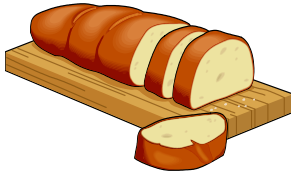


## Protein needs

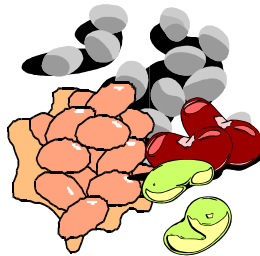
Plant proteins do not contain all the amino acids (building blocks of protein) needed for you and your baby.

However by ensuring you have a wide range of different plant proteins each day you can obtain all the essential amino acids needed for growth. This can be done by combining-

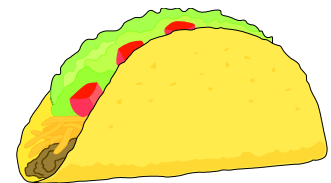
Bread, cereals, rice, pasta +



Lentils, dried peas, = beans



- ◆ Baked beans on toast
- ◆ Rice and bean casserole
- ◆ Bean taco
- ◆ Lentil and vegetable soup with bread



Bread, cereals, rice, pasta +



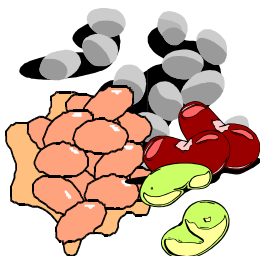
Nuts and seeds, = peanuts, walnuts, tahini, sesame seeds



- ◆ Peanut butter on toast
- ◆ Pita bread with tahini
- ◆ Weetbix and peanut butter
- ◆ Hommous with dry biscuits

If you include dairy products as part of your vegetarian diet it is much easier to obtain all the essential building blocks.

Breads, cereals, lentils, + dried peas and beans, nuts and seeds.



Dairy foods and eggs, = milk, cheese, yoghurt.



- ◆ Cereal with milk
- ◆ Rice pudding
- ◆ Pasta topped with cheese.
- ◆ Cheese sandwich
- ◆ Scrambled eggs on toast.
- ◆ Fried rice with egg.