

Healthy Eating on a Vegetarian Diet

Vegetarian sources of iron

Vegetarians are more likely to have lower iron stores than meat eaters.

Good sources of iron for vegetarians include:

- eggs
- pulses
- dried fruit
- dark green vegetables, such as watercress, broccoli and spring greens
- wholemeal bread
- fortified cereals (with added iron)

Vegetarian sources of vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is needed for growth, repair and general health. It's only found naturally in animal products.

If you regularly eat eggs or dairy products, you probably get enough. But if you only eat a small amount or avoid all animal products, it's important to have a reliable source of vitamin B12 in your diet.

Good sources of vitamin B12 include:

- milk
- cheese
- eggs
- fortified yeast extracts, such as Marmite
- fortified breakfast cereals
- fortified soya products

Vegetarian sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, primarily those found in oily fish, can help maintain a healthy heart and reduce the risk of heart disease when eaten as part of a healthy diet.

Sources of omega-3 fatty acids suitable for vegetarians include:

- flaxseed (linseed) oil
- rapeseed oil
- soya oil and soya-based foods, such as tofu
- walnuts
- egg enriched with omega-3

Evidence suggests that vegetarian sources of omega-3 fatty acids may not have the same benefits for reducing the risk of heart disease as those in oily fish.

But if you eat a vegetarian diet, you can still look after your heart by eating at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day, cutting down on food high in saturated fat, and watching how much salt you eat.