



P L A N T

B A S E D



### What is a vegan diet?

A vegan diet excludes all animal products and animal by-products. Animal products include meat, poultry, game, fish and shellfish, while animal by-products are milk, cheese, yoghurts and other dairy products, eggs, animal fats and gelatin.

A vegan diet is different to a vegetarian diet. Someone who is a vegetarian will not eat animal products, but they may eat animal by-products. However, a vegan will not eat any animal product or any food containing animal by-products; a vegan diet contains only plants (vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, etc) and foods that are made from plants.

### Why do people choose a vegan diet?

#### 1. Preventing animal cruelty

People may choose a vegan diet in order to prevent cruelty to animals. They believe that all creatures have the right to live and should not be killed simply to put food on our plates. Animals farmed for their meat and/or their by-products often suffer cruel and inhumane treatment - whether it is cattle being slaughtered for meat, or chickens crammed together in overcrowded egg factories.



#### 3. Increased awareness and accessibility

We have access to so much information now, making it easy for people to become more informed about a vegan diet. Access to this information can encourage more people to choose a vegan diet.

As veganism is becoming more popular, there is more choice and availability of vegan products. Supermarkets have entire plant-based food ranges, specialist vegan cafes and restaurants can be found on most high streets and major coffee chains offer customers a choice of plant-based milk products for their daily latte!

#### 2. Health benefits

A vegan diet can be a healthy one - grains, fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and cholesterol and rich in fibre and vitamins. A range of alternative sources need to be included in a vegan diet to maintain good nutrition. There is evidence to show vegans can benefit from having lower levels of cholesterol and blood pressure, a lower body mass index and reduced risk of death from heart disease and cancer.

#### 4. Helping the environment

The farming of animals for food is harmful to the environment. For example:

- Lots of land is needed for farming animals and the crops to feed them. This land may have been stripped of trees, which has a negative impact on the environment.
- Around 1/3 of the world's water consumption is used for producing animal products.
- Vehicles used to farm, feed and transport animals release harmful emissions.
- Animals pollute the environment - cows belch out enormous amounts of methane (a powerful greenhouse gas).



## Vitamin B12

The body needs vitamin B12 to maintain healthy blood and a healthy nervous system.

- Breakfast cereals fortified with B12
- Unsweetened soya drinks fortified with vitamin B12
- Yeast extract, such as Marmite, which is fortified with vitamin B12
- Vitamin B12 supplements

# VEGAN

Vegans may find it difficult to include essential nutrients commonly found in animal products/by-products. Find out how a vegan diet can provide all the nutrients that the body needs.

## Protein

When you eat proteins, your body breaks the proteins down into amino acids. Your body needs amino acids to help with the growth and repair of muscles, blood cells, hair and other tissues. Certain amino acids can't be made by your body, so they need to come from proteins in your diet instead.

- Pulses and beans
- Cereals (wheat, oats and rice)
- Soya products (tofu, soya drinks and textured soya protein, such as soya mince)
- Nuts and seeds

## Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids can help maintain a healthy heart and reduce the risk of heart disease when eaten as part of a healthy diet.

- Flaxseed (linseed) or rapeseed oil
- Soya oil and soya-based foods, eg tofu
- Walnuts

## Iron

Iron is essential for the production of red blood cells. Lots of plant-based foods contain iron – however, the body doesn't absorb this source of iron as well as it absorbs iron from meat.

- Pulses
- Wholemeal bread and flour
- Breakfast cereals fortified with iron
- Dark green, leafy vegetables, (eg watercress, broccoli and spring greens)
- Nuts
- Dried fruits

## Calcium & vitamin D

Calcium is needed to maintain healthy bones and teeth, and vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body.

Calcium:

- Green, leafy vegetables – such as broccoli, cabbage and okra
- Fortified unsweetened soya, rice and oat drinks
- Calcium-set tofu
- Sesame seeds and tahini
- Pulses
- Brown and white bread
- Dried fruit, such as raisins, prunes, figs and apricots

Vitamin D:

- Exposure to sunlight
- Fat spreads, breakfast cereals and unsweetened soya drinks which have been fortified with vitamin D
- Vitamin D supplements