



“It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that appropriately planned vegetarian, including vegan, diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits for the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. These diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, **including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood, and for athletes.**”<sup>2</sup>

Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2016

Every mother-to-be wants to make sure they are taking the best action for their child. Mothers and unborn children can and do thrive on a plant based diet. We are here to provide you with support and information should you need it.

## **PREGNANCY**

Every woman needs high-quality food during pregnancy; extra nutrition is needed for her developing baby. The need for many nutrients increases during pregnancy, including calcium, protein, iron, and folic acid. It is important to eat foods that are nutrient dense. Take note of recommendations for pregnancy, and increase your intake where needed.

## SOME BASIC TIPS:

- Begin a healthy diet before you become pregnant. The early growth and development of your baby is supported by your body's stores of nutrients and becoming pregnant is easier when you are healthy.
- See your health care provider – ideally one who understands veg~nism.
- Limit your consumption of the empty calories found in highly processed foods and snacks. It is easy to put on extra weight in pregnancy because you are hungry and nobody will notice the weight gain, especially in the final months. Make your calories count.
- Each day have food rich in protein, carbohydrates, vitamin C and B12, folic acid, zinc, calcium, omega 3 and iron.
- Go to our website [www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz) to order a plant-based nutritional chart!

## KEY NUTRIENTS IN PREGNANCY INCLUDE:

### IRON

Iron deficiency is a risk to all pregnant women. Many women, including meat eaters, need to take supplements during pregnancy – particularly during the later stages. Remember to eat vitamin C-rich foods to help with absorption of iron.

### VITAMIN B12

Ensure a reliable source of vitamin B12 is taken daily.

### VITAMIN D

It is important during pregnancy to ensure that you are getting adequate sunshine or take a supplement, as vitamin D helps with the absorption of calcium.

### FOLATE (FOLIC ACID)

Folic acid is especially important at the very beginning of pregnancy. It assists in the process of cell division which is taking place at a rapid rate in the first weeks. It also helps prevent neural tube defects (abnormalities of the spinal cord and brain of the baby).

Veg~ns typically have higher levels of folate than non-veg~ns due to their higher intake of legumes, fruits and vegetables. Ensure you get your five-plus-a-day and follow your health provider's recommendations. Too much folate can mask B12 deficiencies.



## OMEGA 3

A baby requires the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA for the normal development of its retinas, brain and central nervous system. A pregnant woman's body has an increased ability to synthesize these fatty acids (EPA+DHA) from alpha-linolenic acid (ALA).<sup>1</sup>

Good plant-based sources of ALA are linseed (flaxseed), chia seeds, walnuts and hemp seeds, but it is also found in edamame beans and green leafy vegetables.

To maximise the conversion of omega-3 fatty acids to EPA and DHA, we should aim for a ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 in the range of 2:1 to 4:1. Foods containing trans-fats should be avoided as they inhibit DHA production.

Many health professionals recommend that we supplement with EPA and DHA. There are many plant-based EPA and DHA supplements available made from algae.



## BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is optimum for both mother and baby with breast milk providing baby's full nutritional requirements for at least the first 6 months. Mother-to-mother support can be helpful at this time, through La Leche League ([www.lalecheleague.org.nz](http://www.lalecheleague.org.nz)), Plunket and/or your health professional.

The guidelines for breastfeeding mothers are similar to those for pregnant women. The first six months of breastfeeding requires 500 calories more than usual, so you will need to boost your food intake a little bit. Be sure the extra food is of good nutritional value. It is also important to have plenty of fluids. It's a good idea to keep water handy whenever you sit down to breastfeed.

Protein needs are the same as during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy (25 grams per day more than pre-pregnancy needs).<sup>3</sup>



# SAMPLE MENU

## BREAKFAST

- 1 cup cereal with ½ cup blueberries or other fruit and 1 cup milk\*
- 1 slice whole wheat toast with 2T almond butter or seed butter
- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice or other fruit

## LUNCH

- Sandwich with ½ cup seasoned tofu, 2 slices of whole-grain bread, lettuce
- 2 cups tossed salad with ½ avocado, 2T liquid gold dressing (below)

### Liquid gold dressing

½ cup flaxseed oil  
½ cup water  
1/3 cup lemon juice  
1T vinegar cider or balsamic  
2T tamari sauce  
½ cup nutritional yeast  
1T ground flaxseeds  
2T Dijon mustard  
1 tsp ground cumin  
Blend all, store in fridge for up to 2 weeks

## DINNER

- 1 cup beans, 1/2 cup brown rice
- ½ to 1 cup cooked kale with lemon juice
- 1 large tomato, sliced

## SNACKS

- ½ cup carrot sticks with ¼ cup hummus
- 2 figs or other fruit
- 2T almonds or other nuts

\*milk - unsweetened plant milks fortified with calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12

## NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS

Calories: 2,135; protein: 97g; fat: 85g, carb: 271g, fibre: 60g, calcium: 1,400 to 2,109mg (depending on choice of tofu, nuts and fruit), iron: 22mg, magnesium: 791mg, phosphorus: 1,871mg, potassium: 4,938mg, selenium: 94mcg, sodium: 1,451mg, zinc: 15mg, vitamin B1: 3.2mg, vitamin B2: 3.4mg, vitamin B3: 23mg, vitamin B5: 6.1mg, vitamin B6: 28mg, folate: 911mg, vitamin B12: 5.1mcg, vitamin C: 234mg, omega-6 fatty acids: 21g, omega-3 fatty acids: 6.8g



## References

1. Davis, B. RD and Melina V. MS. RD. (2014). Becoming Vegan. Comprehensive Edition. Book Publishing Company, Summertown, US.
2. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2016). Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Vegetarian Diets.
3. Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine. (2005). Dietary reference intakes for energy, carbohydrate, fiber, fat, fatty acids, cholesterol, protein, and amino acids (macronutrients)., Washington, DC: National Academy Press

**There are more leaflets available, check out the resources on our website:**  
[www.vegetarian.org.nz/about-us/resources/](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz/about-us/resources/)

## WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

[www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz)  
[www.vegfamily.com](http://www.vegfamily.com)  
[www.viva.org.uk](http://www.viva.org.uk)  
[www.vrg.org/family/](http://www.vrg.org/family/)  
[www.pcrm.org/nutritionfacts.org](http://www.pcrm.org/nutritionfacts.org)  
[lalecheleague.org.nz](http://lalecheleague.org.nz)



(09) 523-4686  
[info@vegetarian.org.nz](mailto:info@vegetarian.org.nz)  
[www.vegetarian.org.nz](http://www.vegetarian.org.nz)  
PO Box 26664, Epsom, Auckland 1344

*If you found this information useful, please consider joining as a member to receive further information and support, or donating to help us continue to provide resources for others.*