



MyPlate.gov offers ideas for vegan diets

I'm a vegan and think I eat pretty healthfully, but I feel like I'm in a rut with my day-to-day diet. Any suggestions?

As a vegan, you don't consume any animal products — not even dairy or eggs. Although your food options are more limited than other people — and other vegetarians — there's still plenty you can do to add variety.

The new Choose MyPlate campaign to promote the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans offers a series of tipsheets to help people incorporate the guidelines into their daily lives. One is devoted to "Healthy Eating for Vegetarians" — you can download it by going to the MyPlate website, <http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov> and clicking on the "10 Tips Nutrition Education Series" icon. Even more ideas are offered on another page: http://www.choosemyplate.gov/tipsresources/vegetarian_diets.html. Check out those resources to see if they give you some fresh ideas. Here are a few to get you started:

- It's summertime, so break out the barbecue grill. Besides veggie or soy burgers and hot dogs, try marinated tofu or tempeh and grilled veggies. Grilled pineapple slices and other fruits are great for dessert.

- Mexican food — chock-full of high-fiber beans and salsa — offers great vegan options. But also try Asian and Indian dishes for variety.

Visit local restaurants for fresh ideas.

- As a vegan, don't forget that you need to take special care you're getting enough vitamin B12, which is usually supplied by consuming meat, eggs, milk or other animal products. Look for foods that are fortified with the vitamin, such as breakfast cereals, soymilk, veggie burgers or nutritional yeast.

- The same goes for calcium. Since you don't eat dairy products, be sure to get calcium from fortified breakfast cereals, soymilk or orange juice; tofu made from calcium sulfate; or high-calcium dark leafy green vegetables such as collard, turnip and mustard greens, or bok choy.

- Just like anyone else, make sure you're eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables in order to get a wide range of nutrients. The Dietary Guidelines offer a vegan adaptation of food patterns, including recommended amounts of various types of produce. Go to <http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov> and click on "Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010." Download the Appendices, then check Appendix 6 for the number of calories you should target each day. Then go to Appendix 9 to review recommended daily amounts to be sure your diet is healthy and balanced.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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