

Client Name _____ Date _____

RD/DTR _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Vegetarian Nutrition for Teen Athletes

A vegetarian eating plan can be healthy for teen athletes. You may find it useful to meet with a registered dietitian (RD). The RD can help design an eating plan that meets your personal nutritional needs.



Here are some general tips for making healthy vegetarian choices:

- Eat mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk foods or fortified nondairy “milks.”
 - Choose a variety of different colored fruits and vegetables every day.
 - Choose whole grains for at least half of each day’s grain servings. Choices include whole wheat, brown rice, oats, barley, bulgur, and cornmeal.
- For protein, choose beans, soy foods, nuts, and nut butters. You can also eat eggs if they fit the type of vegetarian diet you follow.
- Choose heart-healthy fats, such as olive oil and canola oil.
- Limit foods with added sugar.

Types of Vegetarians

As you discuss nutrition and meal planning with your RD or other health care providers, it can be useful to identify the type of vegetarian you are.

- **Lacto-ovo-vegetarian:** Does not eat meat, poultry, seafood, or products made from meat, poultry, or seafood (such as gelatin, broths, gravy, and lard).
- **Lacto-vegetarian:** Does not eat meat, poultry, seafood, or products made from meat, poultry, or seafood (such as gelatin, broths, gravy, and lard). Also does not eat eggs or products containing eggs (such as many baked goods).
- **Vegan:** Does not eat meat, poultry, seafood, or products made from meat, poultry, or seafood (such as gelatin, broths, gravy, and lard). Also does not eat eggs, products containing eggs, milk, dairy foods (such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream), ingredients made from milk (such as whey and casein), or honey.

Recommended Foods

Food Group	Recommended Foods
Milk and Milk Products	Low-fat or fat-free milk* Buttermilk* Evaporated skim milk* Fat-free or low-fat milk* Fortified soy milk Nonfat or low-fat yogurt* Powdered milk* Nonfat or low-fat cheese* Low-fat ice cream*
Protein Foods	Dried beans Soy foods Nuts and nut butters Eggs*
Grains	All types Choose whole grains for at least half of your grain servings.
Vegetables	All types
Fruits	All types
Fat and Oils	Heart-healthy vegetable oils, such as olive or canola oil Low-fat salad dressings and mayonnaise

Note: Individuals following a vegan diet will not eat foods marked with an asterisk (*). Those following a lacto vegetarian or a vegan diet will not eat eggs.

Notes:

Sample 1-Day Lacto-ovo Vegetarian Menu

This menu is designed for a 15-year-old lacto-ovo-vegetarian athlete. Ask an RD whether the menu is suitable for you.

Breakfast	1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice 1 slices whole wheat toast 1 tablespoons peanut butter 1 cup diced cantaloupe
Lunch	Sandwich: 2 slices whole wheat bread, ½ cup hummus Medium apple ½ cup calcium-fortified orange juice
Snack	1/2 cup trail mix Large orange
Evening Meal	1 cup low-fat milk 1½ cups spaghetti with ¾ cup kidney beans, ¾ cup meatless marinara sauce, and 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese 1½ cups mixed salad greens with 1 tablespoons Italian dressing 2 whole wheat rolls 1 cup steamed broccoli 1 teaspoon olive oil
Snack	1 cup low-fat milk 1½ ounces ready-to-eat breakfast cereal 1 cup low-fat ice cream

2,725 kcal; 96 g protein; 442 g carbohydrate; 78 g fat.

Notes:

Sample 1-Day Vegan Menu

This menu is designed for a 15-year-old vegan athlete. Ask an RD whether it is suitable for you.

Breakfast	1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice 1 slice whole wheat toast 1 tablespoon peanut butter 1 cup diced cantaloupe
Lunch	Sandwich: 2 slices whole wheat bread, ½ cup hummus Medium apple ½ cup calcium-fortified orange juice
Snack	¾ cup trail mix Large orange
Evening Meal	1 cup fortified soy milk 1½ cups spaghetti with ¾ cup kidney beans, and ¾ cup meatless marinara sauce 1½ cups mixed salad greens with 1 tablespoons Italian dressing 2 whole wheat rolls 1 cup steamed broccoli 1 teaspoon olive oil
Snack	1 cup fortified soy milk 1½ ounces ready-to-eat breakfast cereal

2,698 kcal; 97 g protein; 416 g carbohydrate; 87 g fat.

Notes:

Tips for Vegetarian Athletes

- A vegetarian diet can be a very healthy way for athletes to eat. Be sure to include plenty of whole grains, cooked beans, fruits, and vegetables. Soy foods are good sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals.
- Milk and dairy foods are good sources of vitamin B-12, calcium, and vitamin D. If you do not drink milk or eat dairy foods, take care that you are getting enough of these nutrients.
 - Vitamin B-12 is added to some foods. You may find it in soy milk, breakfast cereal, some veggie burgers, and some brands of nutritional yeast. Children’s vitamins may also have vitamin B-12.
 - Calcium is found in some green vegetables, such as kale and broccoli. It is also added to many brands of soy milk and orange juice.
 - Vitamin D is added to some brands of soy milk and fruit juice. Vitamin D supplements not made from animal products are also available.
- Vegetarian athletes should have their iron status checked periodically by their health care team. This is especially important for distance runners. Vegetarian foods that supply iron include:
 - Whole and enriched grains and grain foods
 - Iron-fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereals
 - Iron-fortified veggie “meats”
 - Cooked dried beans
 - Dark-green vegetables, including kale, spinach, broccoli, and bok choy
 - Potatoes
- Active athletes often need three meals and three healthy snacks daily to make sure they get enough calories.
- If you lose weight without meaning to do so, this is a sign that you are not eating enough calories. This can harm your health and athletic performance. If you need extra calories, eat foods high in protein and healthy fats, such as hummus, nut butters, avocado, and smoothies made with soy milk or cow’s milk.
- Be sure to drink enough fluid before, during, and after practice or sports events.
- Most athletes do not need much more protein than other teens need. You can probably get enough protein from foods, without taking protein or amino acid supplements. Good vegetarian sources of protein include soy foods, cooked beans, nuts and nut butters, milk and dairy foods, and eggs.
- If you are the only vegetarian in your family, you can help with meal preparation by thinking of foods that everyone can enjoy. Some vegetarian meals will work for all family members. Sometimes, the person cooking can prepare a vegetarian dish (such as stir-fry or pasta sauce) and then add meat to portions for the family members who eat meat. Also, keep some frozen convenience foods (like veggie burgers) for times when the family meal is meat-based.