

Veg Out! Eating a Plant Based Diet

Plant-based diets are becoming more popular among college students. Many higher education dining facilities are incorporating vegan and vegetarian options into their daily menu offerings, including Villanova University. Remember—before making changes to your diet—consult your doctor and dietitian!

Types of Diets

Vegan: Eats only plant products

Lacto-Vegetarian: Eats dairy products along with a plant-based diet

Ovo-Vegetarian: Eats eggs along with a plant-based diet

Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian: Eats both dairy and eggs along with a plant-based diet

Pesco-Vegetarian: Eats fish along with a plant-based diet

Flexitarian: While there is no formal definition, this generally refers to a lacto-ovo vegetarian who occasionally eats meat, fish or poultry



Protein Requirements

To ensure adequate nutrition, vegans and vegetarians need to eat a wide variety of foods, including unprocessed whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans and soy products. Vegans may find it a little trickier to get enough protein. Protein requirements vary for each individual, but at minimum males need 59 grams protein/day and females need 44 grams protein/day.

Food Sources	Serving	Protein (grams) per Calories
Kidney Beans	1/2 cup	8 grams/120 calories
Garbanzo Beans	1/2 cup	7 grams/110 calories
Hummus	2 tbsp	3 grams/70 calories
Tofu	2.8 ounces	8 grams/80 calories
Vegan Burger	1 burger	11 grams/270 calories
Soy Milk	8 ounces	7 grams/100 calories
Three Bean Chili	12 ounces	7 grams/135 calories
Peanut Butter	2 tbsp	7 grams/190 calories
Sunflower Seeds	1 tbsp	2 grams/55 calories



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Dietary Supplementation

Individuals following a plant-based diet also need to ensure their diet includes vitamin B12, calcium, iron, zinc and vitamin D.

Vitamin B12

Vegan diets without vitamin supplementation do not provide Vitamin B12. Dairy and eggs supply vitamin B12, but depending on food choices some lacto-ovo vegetarians may have inadequate intakes. Foods including some cereals, soy and rice milk and protein supplements have been fortified with vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 is well-absorbed from these fortified foods. The recommended daily intake for vitamin B12 is 6 micrograms.

Product	Serving Size	Vitamin B12 (micrograms)
Soy Milk	8 ounces	3
Rice Milk	8 ounces	1.5
Cheerios	1 cup	1.5
Corn Chex	1 cup	1.5
Raisin Bran	1 cup	1.5

Iron

Because of lower bioavailability of iron from a vegetarian diet, the recommended iron intakes for vegetarians are 1.8 times those of non-vegetarians. Thus vegan and vegetarian men need 14 mg/day of iron and pre-menopausal women require 33 mg/day of iron.

Product	Serving Size	Iron (milligrams)
Soy Milk	8 ounces	8
Cheerios	1 cup	8
Spinach	1 cup	1
Raisin Bran	1 cup	5
Beans	1/2 cup	2



Calcium

Studies indicate some female vegetarians and a substantial percentage of female vegans do not consume enough calcium. The recommended daily intake for calcium is 1,000 milligrams.

Zinc

Zinc intakes of vegetarians vary, with some research showing zinc intakes near recommendations and other research finding zinc intakes of vegetarians significantly below recommendations. The recommended daily intake for zinc is 15 milligrams.

Product	Serving Size	Calcium (milligrams)
Soy Milk	8 ounces	400
Rice Milk	8 ounces	300
Tofu	3 ounces	65
Cooked Spinach	1/2 cup	120
Beans	1/2 cup	40

Product	Serving Size	Zinc (milligrams)
Tofu	3 ounces	1
Beans	1/2 cup	1
Raisin Bran	1 cup	1.5
Cheerios	1 cup	4
Almonds	1 ounce	1



Vitamin D

The recommended daily intake for vitamin D is 400 international units. To increase your vitamin D intake, make sure you consume fortified foods or get at least 20 minutes of sunlight each day.