

Why go Vegetarian?

Growing in popularity, following a vegetarian diet has now gone mainstream. Polls show that there are now about eight million Americans following a vegetarian diet. Also growing in popularity are the dishes produced by the many new vegetarian food companies and restaurants. In fact, vegetarian is America's trendiest cuisine, attracting the most gifted and creative chefs. Even the finest cooking schools now feature training in vegetarian cuisine.

But there's also a growing awareness of the many profound health advantages of a vegetarian diet. There's a reason that, on average, vegetarians live several years longer than non-vegetarians. As study after study shows, a health-promoting vegetarian diet not only helps prevent a wide range of diseases, but also helps those already suffering from disease to get well again.

Health advantages are seen at all ages and for all demographic groups. Vegetarians have a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, asthma, constipation, gall stones and certain forms of cancer such as colon and prostate cancer.

We can make a real improvement in the quality of our own lives and those of our families by choosing a vegetarian diet., and we'll be helping heal the environment and save the lives and suffering of animals as we do.

What to Eat?

A healthy vegetarian diet is based on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes (beans, peas, lentils), with small amounts of nuts and seeds, and plenty of water. Add a one-a-day multivitamin for nutritional insurance. See our website for more ideas. *Changes to your diet should only be made after consulting your doctor.*

How we can help you!

Whether you're already vegetarian, or just thinking about it, we're here to help. Vegetarians of Washington is an independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of people from all walks of life who are interested in a vegetarian diet for a variety of reasons: health, environment, compassion for animals, spiritual, and more.

You don't have to be a vegetarian to join. We encourage people to discover the advantages and experience the pleasures of vegetarian food. We suggest that you proceed at your own pace and do the best you can.

Our **Monthly Dining Event** includes a catered multi-course buffet-style dinner each month. All are welcome to attend. Members of Vegetarians of Washington receive a special discount price.

Free classes are offered on the many benefits of a vegetarian diet at various local venues throughout the region. These include practical information on shopping, cooking and nutrition.

Vegetarians of Washington has produced several **helpful books**, including our latest: *In Pursuit of Great Food: A Plant-Based Shopping Guide*.

Vegfest, the largest vegetarian food festival in the United States, is held at the Seattle Center in the Spring of each year. It is a celebration of healthy vegetarian food including cooking demonstrations, talks by doctors, a giant vegetarian bookstore, and a huge variety of free food samples to try.

Members receive a free year's subscription to the ***Vegetarian Times***, a popular magazine packed with nutritional advice, articles, and recipes. Our high-quality e-newsletter covers local news and events.

Learn More at VegofWA.org



Defeating Diabetes with a Vegetarian Diet

Diabetes (Type II) has reached epidemic proportions. Eleven percent of men and nine percent of women over the age of 20 have some form of diabetes. It represents a growing crisis—one in three Americans born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

The consequences can be serious. Diabetes increases the risk of heart and kidney disease, and can even lead to blindness. There are also serious complications such as painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy where nerves in the extremities such as the legs and feet are damaged.

A vegetarian diet can help prevent and even reverse this condition.

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A vegetarian diet is the single best solution to the growing problem of diabetes.

TYPE II DIABETES

Type II Diabetes (formerly called adult-onset diabetes) results from insulin resistance, where the body fails to properly utilize insulin. As the disease progresses, the body's production of insulin may also diminish. Since insulin is necessary for the cells in the body to utilize blood sugar for energy, the diabetic experiences a number of health problems.

Impact of Animal Foods

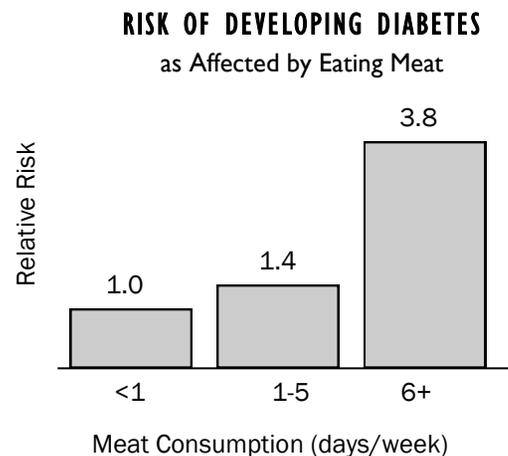
Animal products such as meat and dairy contain saturated fats which have been shown to cause insulin resistance. Also, substances known as AGEs (advanced glycation end products), present in cooked animal products, have been shown to be directly associated with insulin resistance.

Impact of Plant Foods

While animal products increase the risk of diabetes, the fiber plentiful in plant foods, but totally absent in animal products, helps prevent and control diabetes by allowing a slower absorption of food thus preventing blood sugar spikes and crashes. Other substances in plant foods, called phytonutrients, reduce the risk of insulin resistance. Also, vegetarians, on average have better blood sugar (glucose) levels.

Vegetarians have a 80% decreased risk of Type II Diabetes. Those following a vegetarian diet also have significantly less insulin resistance than non-vegetarians.

The chart below shows how your risk of developing diabetes increases, the more meat you eat. Your risk increases similarly when you eat other animal foods such as fish, eggs or dairy products.



Source: D.A. Snowdon and R.L. Phillips. 1985. Does a vegetarian diet reduce the occurrence of diabetes? *American Journal of Public Health* 75(5):507-512.

Pre-Diabetes and Obesity

Vegetarians, and especially vegans have a much lower risk of pre-diabetes. They also have much lower risk of obesity which is a risk factor for diabetes. In fact, vegetarians have a 45% decreased risk of being overweight or obese, and vegans have a 65% decreased risk of being overweight or obese.

May Be Better than Metformin

Not only can a vegetarian diet help prevent diabetes it can also help treat it. For instance, in one study a healthy vegetarian diet was even more effective in treating Type II Diabetes than the popular medication, Metformin, plus the American Diabetic Association diet combined.

Peripheral Neuropathy

A vegetarian diet can also help treat some of the complications of diabetes such as diabetic peripheral neuropathy. In one study 80% of patients with diabetic peripheral neuropathy saw a nearly complete remission of pain in only one month. This is highly significant because diabetic peripheral neuropathy is otherwise considered very difficult to treat.

TYPE I DIABETES

Type I Diabetes, formerly called Juvenile Diabetes, usually starts earlier in life and differs from Type II. The immune system attacking the pancreatic cells is thought to be one of the major causes. A healthy diet can still help. There is some evidence that the incidence of Type I Diabetes is associated with the worldwide increases in meat consumption. A plant-based diet is likely to reduce the risk of some of the complications of Type I Diabetes especially heart and kidney disease.