

Vegetarian Diets – Health Benefits and Meeting Nutritional Needs

Research is showing many health benefits associated with vegetarian and plant-based diets, including a reduced risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer, as well as increased longevity. Plant-based diets more closely match recommended dietary guidelines to eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, legumes, wholegrains and to limit saturated fats and sugars. There are also environmental benefits of eating more plant rather than animal foods. While concern is often expressed about the ability of a vegetarian diet to meet nutritional needs, research has shown that a varied and balanced plant-based diet can provide all the nutrients needed for good health. However a vegetarian diet does not mean just cutting out meat. Careful planning along with knowledge of practical ideas for using a variety of plant foods is needed to ensure nutritional requirements are still met.

This course explores the following topics:

- ▲ What is a vegetarian – types of vegetarian diets
- ▲ Health benefits of a vegetarian diet
- ▲ Meeting nutritional needs
- ▲ Key nutrients in vegetarian diets including protein, iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin B12, omega 3, and vitamin D
- ▲ Vegetarian meal planning and practical tips
- ▲ Supplements – are they needed?

Upon successful completion, course participants will:

- ✓ Be familiar with the different types of vegetarian diets
- ✓ Understand the various reasons someone might choose to follow a vegetarian diet
- ✓ Be aware of the health benefits of a vegetarian diet
- ✓ Be able to identify the key nutrients of concern in a vegetarian diet
- ✓ Understand the key food sources of important nutrients for those following a vegetarian diet
- ✓ Be familiar with meal planning principles for vegetarian diets
- ✓ Understand where supplements might be advisable for someone following a vegetarian diet
- ✓ Be aware of useful resources for vegetarian diets
- ✓ Be able to provide appropriate nutrition advice to those who choose a vegetarian diet

Course creator bio: Kate is an Advanced Accredited Practicing Dietitian with a Masters of Nutrition and Dietetics and PhD in nutrition from the University of Sydney. She works in private practice in Sydney and has a particular interest in diabetes, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), vegetarian nutrition and nutrition in pregnancy & pre-conception. Kate is convenor of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) National Vegetarian Interest Group, and writes and speaks regularly on the topic of vegetarian nutrition. She is co-author of *The Low GI Vegetarian Cookbook* and has published articles on vegetarian nutrition for a number of nutrition and medical journals including a recent supplement in the Medical Journal of Australia. Kate is a long-time vegan and is passionate about the health and environmental benefits of vegetarian and plant-based eating.

