

## BEING "DIFFERENT"

Your child may be the only vegan child at school or in the extended family, so it is vital they receive enough support to not feel isolated for being "different". Engage in activities to help your child develop a sense of belonging to the wider vegan community. Read vegan-friendly story books. There may be a vegan families group in your area where your child can make friends. If not, start one. Contact the Vegan Society for ideas and contacts. Watch pro-vegan family movies such as *Babe*, *Bee Movie*, *Chicken Run* and *A Shark's Tale*. Encourage your child to become a penpal with another vegan child. Join the NZ Vegan Parent facebook group. Remind your child that everyone in their own way is "different" and unique.

## GOING TO SCHOOL

Schools try to support their pupils' family values so they will appreciate being informed of your child's veganism. Under the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum, they are required to be inclusive of all children and so should try to ensure your child is not excluded from learning opportunities due to being vegan. It might be helpful to notify them in writing so that it can be added to your child's file for future teachers.

## FOUND THIS USEFUL? WE HAVE LOADS MORE.

Visit our website for a complete list of helpful nutrition leaflets, recommended links and vegan recipes.

scan me!



## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If your child is invited to parties, check with the host if there will be any vegan food and if not, offer to make some. Talk to your child before the party so they know there will be non-vegan food and can plan what to do. You could say if there is anything at the party they want that is not vegan, you will give them the vegan equivalent when they come home. Delaying gratification is a life skill and one most vegans learn quickly.

## HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Before choosing a health professional for your family, find out their views on veganism. A helpful health professional will be up to date on vegan nutrition, positive about your child's veganism, and able to give correct information and support should any difficulties arise.

# VEGAN CHILDREN A FRESH START



## HEALTHY, HAPPY AND FULL OF LIFE!

Whether your child is vegan because of your family's lifestyle or their own beliefs, you can be heartened to know that veganism offers a great start in life and opens the way to a healthy and ethically sound diet for any child.

Vegan diets are safe for all ages.<sup>1</sup> A typical vegan diet, (high in fruit and vegetables and low in saturated fats and processed foods), offers many health benefits.<sup>2</sup> In fact, influential paediatrician, Dr Spock, revised his bestselling book on child rearing to recommend that all children be raised vegan for the health benefits.

## DID YOU KNOW?

-  A plant-based diet can provide all the nutritional needs for a growing child
-  Many Kiwi vegan children have grown into very healthy adults
-  A vegan diet is naturally high in fruit and veggies
-  Many children feel compassion for animals and don't like the thought of eating them



**Join us. Support us. Become a volunteer. Attend a potluck or fundraising dinner!**  
Check our website for how to support our work or get involved with our local activities. The CVS is a registered charitable organisation. Donations are tax deductible.

Written by Yolanda Soryl, March 2019. Medical advisor: Dr Mathew Hobbs.  
Thanks to the members of our vegan community for providing their photos for our leaflets. All the children in these photos are life vegans.

[veganchristchurch.org.nz](http://veganchristchurch.org.nz)

## EXCELLENT PLANT-BASED HEALTHY OPTIONS FOR A GROWING CHILD



## BALANCE AND VARIETY ARE THE KEY

The foundation for a healthful adult diet is established in childhood, so include a range of foods from all the vegan food groups in your child's diet. Whilst veganism will offer some protection from the excesses of the meat-laden fast food industry, it is still important to think about the food choices your child is making, and to encourage them to eat a wide variety of foods.



## COPING WITH A FUSSY EATER

It is natural to want your child to enjoy many different foods for the optimum nutrition required to help them grow and thrive. However, some children – whether vegan or not – can be picky. They either reject your healthy offerings or choose the same “boring” familiar foods every day. Relax. Avoid making food a battleground. Continue to offer healthy options to your fussy eater (even if it has to be drenched with tomato sauce!) and, if possible, negotiate a few “must haves” so you know they are gaining their nutritional essentials.

## FEEDING A GROWING CHILD

Growing children need food that gives them plenty of energy and is dense in nutrients. Frequent, regular meals and snacks will help fill small tummies and provide nourishing energy for their busy days.

Healthy options include:

**Breakfast:** cereals (porridge, Weetbix, muesli), wholemeal toast or rolls with fruit or savoury spreads, fruit and plant milk smoothies, soy or coconut yoghurt, wholemeal pancakes, pikelets or waffles, fresh or stewed fruit

**Lunch:** pita pockets, rolls, sandwiches or wraps with salad/vegetables, spreads, falafel, burgers, vegan cheese or soy yogurt, dips and chips, pies and savouries, soup, baked beans, muffins, fresh fruit

**Dinner:** rice, pasta, quinoa, potatoes or noodles with a vegetable, bean or tofu casserole (or stew or stir fry), burgers, loaf or sausages with a nut or bean base, or pizza with salad/vegetables and fruit

**Snacks:** crackers, hummus, muesli bars, dried or fresh fruit, nuts, seeds, yoghurt, popcorn, scones, sandwiches (try marmite or peanut butter), frozen banana or juice ice blocks.



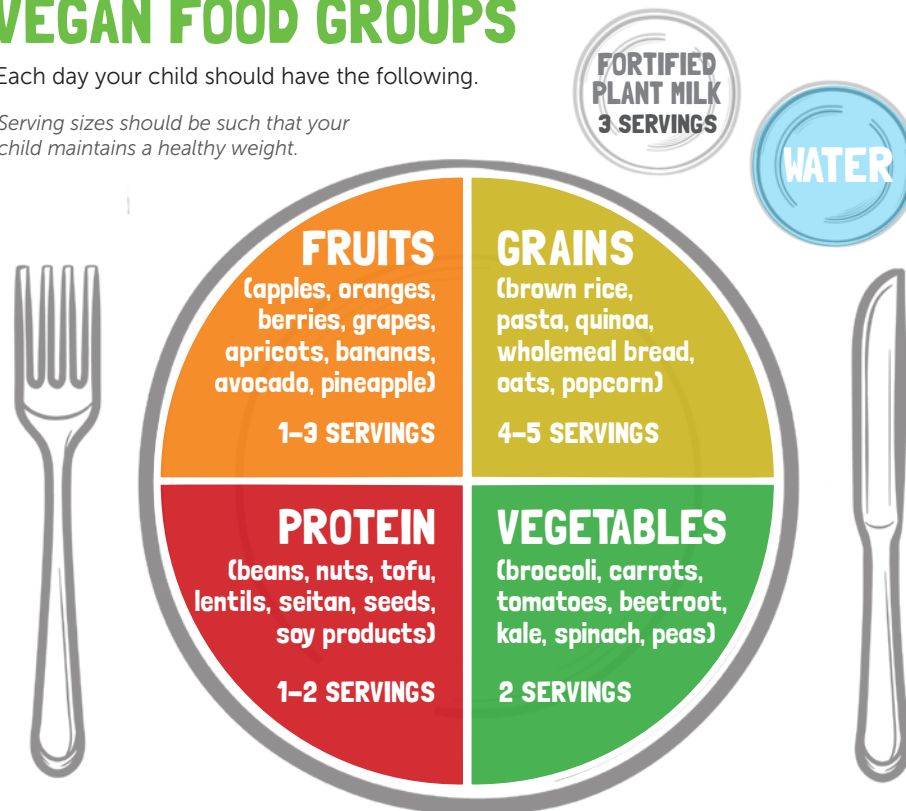
## HANDY HINTS

- 1) Adding a tablespoon of flaxseed oil to smoothies or cereal offers extra calories and omega-3s.
- 2) To maximise iron absorption, make eating fruit a habit at every meal.
- 3) To ensure your child is obtaining vitamin B12, supplement regularly and choose B12 fortified foods and plant milks where possible. Download our leaflet on B12 for more detailed information.

## VEGAN FOOD GROUPS

Each day your child should have the following.

*Serving sizes should be such that your child maintains a healthy weight.*



## FREE DOWNLOADS

We have many other informative leaflets on health and nutrition, plus a series on vegan families available at: [veganchristchurch.org.nz](http://veganchristchurch.org.nz)



**“Well planned vegan and other types of vegetarian diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including during pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence.”**

American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada: *Vegetarian Diets*. Statement supported by Dietitians New Zealand.