

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

To provide care for you and your baby throughout your pregnancy, you will need to choose a lead maternity carer (LMC). This is usually a midwife, GP or obstetrician. You might also want to see a dietician, nutritionist, alternative health practitioner or specialist.

Before choosing your health professionals, find out their views about veganism. You will want a health professional who is up to date and positive about your lifestyle, and is able to give you correct information and support should difficulties arise. A negative response to your veganism from your LMC or health professional is likely to affect the quality of information and support you receive, and how you feel about your care.

Remember that many health professionals, even when supportive of plant based diets, often have no idea about what vegans actually eat or issues to consider such as lactose free medication or vegan food provision in hospital. Show them this leaflet. Realise that they are learning too and you might have to educate them.

Thanks to the members of our vegan community for providing their photos for our leaflets. All the children in these photos are life vegans.



HOSPITAL FOOD

It is vital that you eat well after the birth of your child. Hospital meals can vary considerably in quality, so it pays to be prepared. Take some healthy snacks and ask friends and relatives to deliver some wholesome home cooked meals. Alternatively, use a delivery service.

FREE DOWNLOADS

We have many other informative leaflets on health and nutrition, including raising vegan children, available at: veganchristchurch.org.nz



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!



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.

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veganchristchurch.org.nz

VEGAN PREGNANCY DOING IT RIGHT!



BABY STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

A balanced vegan diet is a great start to growing a new life. A plant-based diet can give you and your baby all the nutrients needed during and after your pregnancy.

There are many advantages for both you and your baby in following a plant-based diet. If you were eating a varied and balanced vegan diet before pregnancy, keep it up! It will support and help protect you through your pregnancy.

DID YOU KNOW?

-  A vegan diet can provide all the nutrients for a healthy pregnancy
-  Plant-based foods are less risky for pregnant women
-  Vegan diets are naturally high in fibre and so may help prevent constipation in pregnancy
-  A vegan diet is typically high in folic acid

EXCELLENT PLANT-BASED FOODS DURING PREGNANCY



ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS IN PREGNANCY

PROTEIN

Protein needs are higher in pregnancy. Excellent sources include plant milk smoothies, toasted nuts over vegetables, and tofu, lentils and beans added to soups, stews or stir fries. Wholegrains such as brown rice, pearled barley, quinoa, millet, oats and wholemeal bread are also good protein sources. Seeds and nuts make a great snack as does Marmite (or miso!) on toast.



THE B VITAMINS

These are found in Marmite or Vegemite, Brazil nuts, oats, whole grain bread, legumes, peas, green vegetables, avocados, peanuts, asparagus, walnuts, cabbage, pumpkin seeds, millet, and whole grain pasta. B12 can be obtained from 3 serves daily of B12 fortified foods but it is easiest and safest to take a B12 supplement to be sure.

IRON

Every woman, vegan or otherwise, can develop an iron deficiency during pregnancy. A healthy vegan diet contains many iron sources (wholegrains, pulses, seeds, green veggies, fortified plant milks etc.) but eating fruit with meals will enhance your iron absorption. Avoid tea, coffee and calcium-rich foods while eating iron rich foods as they can affect absorption.



ZINC

Zinc helps with synthesising protein and making new cells, so it is especially important in pregnancy. Zinc and iron are ideally taken separately as they each decrease the other's absorption.

If you need iron supplements, take them separately from meals so as to enhance the absorption of the zinc. Good sources of zinc include wholegrains, leafy root vegetables, plant milks, seeds and nuts.

"I've had the privilege of witnessing dozens of vegan women go through their pregnancies.... A vegan pregnancy is a beautiful thing, and statistics show it is much lower in medical risk."

Dr Michael Klaper, author of 'Pregnancy, Children, and the Vegan Diet'

CARBOHYDRATES

Needs can be met by a well-balanced diet of vegetables, beans, lentils, wholegrains and fruit. Wholemeal bread, pasta and brown rice etc. contain more micronutrients and fibre.

CALCIUM

Calcium absorption is improved by vitamin D from sunlight. Foods such as green vegetables, wholegrain cereals, tofu, bread, seeds, nuts, legumes and fortified plant milks are rich in calcium.

FOLATE

A vegan diet is naturally higher in folic acid. As this nutrient (a B vitamin) is easily destroyed by cooking, all pregnant women are recommended to take 0.8mg of folic acid daily for at least 4 weeks prior and 12 weeks after conception. Vegan food sources include well washed, fresh, raw or lightly cooked vegetables, raw fruit, cereals, legumes and breads.

OMEGA 3

This is an essential fatty acid that can be easily obtained by adding ground flaxseeds to salad dressings or smoothies. Consume two teaspoons of flaxseed oil or two tablespoons of ground flaxseeds a day.

"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.

FOOD SAFETY - FOODS TO AVOID LIST!

As a vegan, all healthy food in your diet is likely to still be deemed safe to consume in pregnancy. The "Foods To Avoid List" during pregnancy restricts mostly non-vegan foods because they're more likely to carry listeria and salmonella. New Zealand pregnancy eating guidelines do exclude hummus because of a potential risk with tahini but excluding tahini in homemade hummus is fine. Always thoroughly wash fruit and vegetables and avoid eating meals not freshly made.

VEGAN POWER!

Many vegan mums-to-be report high levels of energy during their pregnancy due to the nutrient-rich diet, plus constipation relief from a naturally high-fibre diet.



PREGNANCY CRAVINGS

A craving does not necessarily mean that your body is lacking something. However if you do feel cravings for non-vegan foods, just have their vegan equivalent. For example, if you crave cheese, try the many types of vegan cheeses available or make cheesy toppings for meals with nutritional yeast.

SUPPLEMENTS

Continue supplementing with B12. Supplements recommended for all pregnant women are folic acid-only tablets and iodine-only tablets. If using a pregnancy multivitamin, read the label to ensure it is vegan and check with your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) that it is suitable.

KEEPING FAMILY AND FRIENDS CLOSE

Support from your partner, family and friends is also vital for a happy, stress-free pregnancy. If they are worried about your diet, refer them to the many books, videos and other useful resources on vegan pregnancies. Try to reassure them that many women before you have had happy, healthy babies as a result of their vegan pregnancies and you are not the first. Your healthy pregnancy and baby will be the best evidence in the end.