

## FROM 12 MONTHS

By about one year, most babies can eat family foods. Just mash or cut up whatever you are having. Eating together as a family teaches healthy eating habits, and babies love to copy you by eating the same. Continue to offer your baby milk: either breast or a fortified plant milk (about 500-600mls per day). If your baby has stopped breast feeding, add a teaspoon of flaxseed oil daily to ensure Omega-3 and give a B12 supplement or 2 servings of B12 fortified foods daily.



## THE MATERNAL BOND

The first year of your baby's life is a special and bonding time. Feeling that amazing bond between mother and baby reinforces the decision to follow a plant-based diet for many vegans. The dairy industry is based on the traumatic separation of mothers and babies and ultimately sending both to slaughter.

That feels very real and close to home when you hold your own baby.

## GET OUT AND BE SOCIAL

It is important for both you and your baby to mix with other parents and babies for play and friendship. You might be the only vegan in your playgroup and people will understandably be curious or possibly defensive about their own choices. Ensure you don't feel isolated and that you feel part of the wider vegan families community. Join the NZ Vegan Parents Facebook group and/or local vegan families group. If there isn't one near you, start one. Get in touch with the Vegan Society NZ for ideas and contacts.

## YOUR HEALTH PRACTITIONER

If your health practitioner is not yet familiar with veganism, show them this leaflet and the Ministry of Health free downloadable publication *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers (Aged 0-2)*.<sup>3</sup> The section on feeding vegan infants is informative and broadly positive about raising vegan children.

## 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!



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Written by Yolanda Soryl, March 2019. Medical advisor: Dr Mathew Hobbs.  
Midwife advisor: Janine Puentener RM. 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)



#3 VEGAN BABIES

## A GREAT START TO LIFE FOR YOUR BABY

A plant-based diet is a valid and sensible choice for infants and growing children. Many Kiwi parents have successfully raised their children from babies to adulthood as healthy and active vegans.



Healthy eating habits are set in early childhood<sup>1</sup> so choosing a plant-based diet gives your baby an opportunity to learn to enjoy a variety of healthful foods right from the start.

## DID YOU KNOW?

-  Your child's eating patterns develop in their first year of life
-  Babies only require breastmilk for their first 6 months<sup>2</sup>
-  Plant based foods (e.g., mashed fruits, veggies, cereals) are typical first foods for most babies
-  It's natural for you to want to raise your baby to eat the same healthy foods as you

## RECOMMENDED FOODS AND PRODUCTS FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY



# THE FIRST SIX MONTHS



## FEEDING YOUR BABY

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months and should continue for the first two years of life.<sup>2</sup> Breast milk is the perfect food that your baby will enjoy and thrive on so it is important that you continue to eat well while you are breastfeeding. The amount of food you eat should be the same as you ate during pregnancy. Maintaining a healthy, well balanced vegan diet will mean your baby receives a regular and optimum supply of vitamins and nutrition from your breast milk. Ask for help from your midwife, Plunket nurse, La Leche or lactation consultant if you are experiencing any problems lactating or feeding your baby.



## MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH

Be sure to keep yourself hydrated and eat regularly. Keep a large water bottle and some nutritious snacks beside you when you are breastfeeding. When you are feeling too tired to cook a proper

meal, aim for an easy but nutritious meal choice such as store-bought hummus and falafel with wholemeal pita bread, or vege sausages and baked beans on wholemeal toast. Add a tablespoon of flaxseed oil to your salad dressings or smoothies each day to maintain your Omega-3 needs. Remember to drink B12-fortified plant milks and take a B12 supplement.

## INCREASE YOUR PROTEIN

While breastfeeding your protein requirements are much higher than in pregnancy. Ensure you regularly eat an adequate amount of protein each day. Good plant-based sources include beans, tofu, seitan, lentils, nuts and seeds (if you have any allergies consult with your health professional).

## SUN, REST AND FRESH AIR

Fresh air, exercise and sunshine are also very important and plenty of sunlight means you're meeting your vitamin D requirements and this will be present in your breast milk too.

## NOT BREASTFEEDING?

Plant milk infant formulas are usually not vegan due to the addition of lanolin for vitamin D. However, if breastfeeding is not possible, most vegans would find a plant milk formula with lanolin preferable to cows' milk formula for health and animal welfare reasons. Babies fed soy-based formula grow and develop normally with no evidence of adverse effects.<sup>3</sup>

# INTRODUCING SOLIDS TO YOUR BABY

Did you know many babies begin their life as vegan since the common early weaning choices are mainly plant based foods such as fruit, vegetables and cereals?

## AT 6 MONTHS

Try cooked kumara, potato, pumpkin, carrot, apple, pear or uncooked avocado or banana. You can puree these with a little breast milk or cooled boiled water to make them runny. Introduce solids slowly, a teaspoon a day at first. Gradually increase the amount and frequency over the next few months. Always give your baby the milk feed first, then offer solids.

### USEFUL TIP: FEEDING SOLIDS

Check with your Plunket nurse or health provider as to when to start your baby on solids. Generally, this is advised at around 6 months, but every baby is different.

## AT 8-9 MONTHS

Increase the variety of foods. Great vegan foods to try now include tofu, crackers, corn, yams, bread, courgettes, nut butters, broccoli, plant milk custard and yogurt, cauliflower, peas, soft fresh fruit and beans and lentils. Try a split pea soup, hummus on crackers or scrambled tofu. Slowly increase the lumpiness in your baby's food and you can now mash some items instead of pureeing them. Ensure a good intake of healthy fats (nuts, avocado etc).



**“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.

REFERENCES: 1) Birch, L. et al. (2007) 'Influences on the Development of Children's Eating Behaviours: From Infancy to Adolescence' Can J Diet Pract Res. 2) World Health Organisation, [www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/) 3) Ministry of Health. (2008) Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers (Aged 0-2): A background paper (4th Ed).