

Vegan vs. Vegetarian, Vitamins & Minerals

Vitamins are organic compounds which are needed in small quantities to sustain life. We get vitamins from food because the human body either does not produce enough of them or none at all. The two types of vitamins are water soluble and fat soluble. **Fat soluble vitamins** are stored in the body for days and sometimes even months. **Water soluble vitamins** do not stay in the body long and they are eliminated through urine.

Vitamin	Type	Uses	Sources
A	Fat Soluble	Helps with maintaining good sight	Liver, carrots, broccoli, sweet potato, eggs,
B ₁	Water Soluble	Nerve, muscle and heart function	Yeast, pork, sunflower seeds, brown rice
B ₁₂	Water Soluble	Brain and nervous system function, formation of red blood cells	Fish, shellfish, meat, poultry, eggs
C	Water Soluble	Collagen production, healing of cuts and wounds, prevents infections	Oranges, strawberries, red and green peppers, Brussels sprouts, liver
D	Fat Soluble	Maintains bones and teeth, supports the immune system, regulates insulin	Sunlight, fatty fish, eggs, beef liver, mushrooms
E	Fat Soluble	Antioxidant, protects cells	Kiwi, almonds, avocado, eggs, milk, nuts
K	Fat Soluble	Blood clotting, bone metabolism, regulation of calcium	Leafy green veggies, avocado, kiwi, parsley

Minerals are substances that the body cannot manufacture but are needed for forming healthy bones and teeth and for regulating many vital body processes like making hormones and maintaining a normal heartbeat. There are two types of minerals - macrominerals and trace minerals. Macrominerals are those needed by the body in large quantities. Trace minerals are those needed by the body only in small amounts.

Mineral	Type	Uses	Sources
Calcium	Macro	Building strong teeth and bones	Milk, dairy products, broccoli, dark green leafy veggies
Copper	Trace	Formation of connective tissue, formation of red blood cells	Veggies, legumes, beans, nuts, seeds
Iodine	Trace	Converts food to energy, normal thyroid function	Iodized salt, seafood, dairy products, kelp
Iron	Trace	Red blood cell function	Red meat, pork, fish, shellfish, leafy veggies
Magnesium	Macro	Muscle and nerve function, steadies the heart rhythm	Whole grains, nuts, seeds, leafy veggies
Phosphorus	Macro	Forms healthy teeth and bones, helps the body make energy	Dairy, meat, fish
Potassium	Macro	Heart, muscle, nervous system function	Broccoli, potatoes, bananas, dried fruits,
Zinc	Trace	Normal growth, strong immunity, wound healing	Red meat, poultry, oysters, nuts, milk, dairy products, whole grains

Vegetarianism is the practice of excluding meat in the diet. Some vegetarians eat no meat at all, some vegetarians eat dairy products and eggs but no meat, some vegetarians eat dairy products but not eggs, some vegetarians eat eggs but not dairy products and some vegetarians will not eat red meat but will eat poultry and/or seafood.

Veganism is a philosophy and lifestyle in which people exclude the use of animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose. Vegans do not use or consume animal products of any kind. Vegans only eat plant-based foods. Many animal by-products are things we may not even realize come from animals such as, gelatin (made from meat by-products), lanolin (made from wool), honey and beeswax (made by bees), silk (made by silkworms), and shellac (made by the tiny lac insect).

- Advantages of a vegetarian and vegan diet include lower levels of fat and cholesterol and higher levels of fiber, magnesium and potassium which could aid in the prevention of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.
- Disadvantages of either of these diets include the possibility of not getting enough of the proper nutrients your body needs. A vegan diet eliminates food sources of vitamin B12, which is found almost exclusively in animal products, including milk, eggs, and cheese. A vegan diet also eliminates milk products, which are good sources of calcium.

To ensure a balanced diet, vegans and vegetarians must find alternative sources for B12 and calcium, as well as vitamin D, protein, iron, zinc, and occasionally riboflavin. This can be done by planning ahead and paying attention to food labels of alternate sources for the nutrients your body needs.

