

Vegetarian & Vegan Health Guidebook

It's important to remember that when you are young or have just recently changed from animal-based to plant-based you will not notice any possible issues going on you if you have not replaced animal fats and proteins with something else.

The reason for this is because it can take 2-3 years for the B12 from consuming animal produce to completely leave your body (which is also why you don't need to take a B12 supplement permanently and can actually take it in cycles). In children brought up plant-based research shows that not having enough B12 slows down their brain development and can mess up their hormones later on too, which you may not notice in a growing child as you have no idea what they would be like with animal proteins to base it on. So, especially with children (but with all of us really) it's essential we replace animal-proteins with something else and not simply just cut them out.

The simple fact is that to remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible following a plant-based lifestyle you need to replace animal produce with other things to support your body through all it's cycles and seasons. If you do not your chances of things like autoimmunity, hormonal issues, heart concerns, depression and anxiety all increase and some of these by as much as a 3rd!

Here are the biggies to consider...

B12 – I think most people know by now that B12 is essential for brain health, energy levels, homocysteine (which I highly recommend getting checked) levels and overall health. It's difficult to get B12 on a plant-based diet, but it's essential everyone's health (including animal-based people) have enough. The only plant-based foods with any level of B12 in, is nori (seaweed) and shiitake, chanterelle mushrooms and some fermented foods have a small amount too. However, to get enough B12 you would need to be consuming quite a lot of these each day, so it's important to take a B12 supplement (month on, month off, or season on and season off). The best B12 supplements are the methylcobalamin lozenges or drops or injections, we are not able to use B12 from normal tablets you swallow or from fortified foods.

Note; things like spirulina that claim to have high amounts of B12 contain a pseudo B12 that the body cannot utilise.

Cholesterol – Is way more important than I feel anyone gives it credit for, and we are constantly being told it's bad, when in fact not having enough is seriously bad for us. A good proportion of our brain and much of the rest of our body is made up of cholesterol and not having enough can lead to impaired brain function, memory loss, brain fog, heart issues and many other health ailments. If you are vegetarian/pescatarian you can

get enough cholesterol from eating dairy, but mainly eggs and fish, daily. It is believed that coconut oil may help to add a small amount of cholesterol to your diet, but you would need to consume quite a lot of this daily to get enough. Looking back I feel being raw-vegan and consuming tons of coconut oil daily in many of the raw-vegan meals and cakes I made really kept me going for quite a while. If you are vegan then there are no other sources of cholesterol in the plant-based World, so you will need to supplement or get you coconut oil experiments on!

Amino Acids – I never met a plant-based person who supplements with amino acids (including myself when I was eating this way) and I realise now how incredibly important it is to overall health. There are nine amino acids histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine, that are not synthesized by mammals and are therefore essential we get these through our diet. Most of these cannot be found in plant-foods and over time a lack of these can lead to autoimmunity and many other health concerns. I would recommend a good quality (without gluten and soya) amino acid complex to be taken daily. You will probably not feel any different from taking this daily, but long term it will prevent a lot of health conditions occurring. I really believe if I had focused more on amino acids, cholesterol and loads of good fats I probably would not have become ill with so many chronic and life-threatening illnesses!

Omega 6 & 3 – Unfortunately a plant-based diet (as are many animal-based diets too) can be quite high in omega 6 and we need a nice balance of omega 3 and 6 to be healthy. If you are vegetarian/pescatarian and regularly eating fish, eggs and yogurt you will be balancing out the omega 6 with 3's. If you are vegan this is a little harder to do, but not impossible without supplementation (YAY), this means consuming quite a bit of good quality seaweed and/or algae. If you have a sprinkle of these in most of your meals or make vegan sushi regularly you should hopefully be getting enough. Omega 3's improves brain cognition so it's another reason to get more of them into us.

Vitamin D – Although it's called a vitamin it's more of a hormone and is essential for every cell and tissue in the body. Plant-based Vitamin D that can be added to many foods is not the one our body needs to thrive and thus of very little good to us. The body can synthesis Vit D when it's gets enough cholesterol and enough sun exposure jointly. Enough sun exposure means having the sun on your skin at noon for a least a few mins most day and cholesterol we talked about earlier.

Vitamin K2 – Is a very underrated vitamin, and one that many people are unknowingly deficient in. K1 can be found in many plant foods, however this is not the same as K2. K2 is responsible for many things, including blood clotting and moving calcium into the right places in the body, ie: away from joints and arteries etc and instead into bones and teeth. K2 almost solely comes from animal fats and organs. However, it can be

found to a lesser degree in many fermented foods (not drinks). So maybe it's time to get-your-ferment-on (more about this obsession of mine later).

Vitamin A – Has a long list of things it does in the body and the most wonderful is that it is thought to help prevent cancers. If you are vegetarian/pescatarian and eating plenty of eggs and fish you are likely getting enough of this, if not then it's one that might be worth considering supplementing. With vitamin A you need to make sure you have a good balance of K2, D3 and Zinc too to be able to uptake this vitamin, so if you are deficient in the others, it's easy to become deficient in this also.

Zinc – Is important for your immune system, fighting bad bacteria and viruses and the growth of our cells, among many other things. It's found in its highest concentration in animal-based produce; however it can also be found in legumes, sprouts and fermented foods, but you will need to make sure you are getting some or all of these daily or all of these.

Iron – Protects red blood cells and carries oxygen around the body and a whole heap of other things. It can be found in small amounts in beans and mushrooms, most other planet-based sources are not easy for our body to utilise. Also cooking in cast iron pans helps up your iron intake. So, again it seems mushrooms are your friend!clever little fungi! ;0)

So, what's important to eat lots of?

Mushrooms (especially shiitake & chanterelles), algae, seaweed and fermented foods.

What to avoid for long term health...

Gluten – Gluten should be avoided with a bargepole no matter if you are animal or plant-based. Even if you do not feel bloated, down or lacking in energy after eating it, it is still harming health long term. If your digestive system is impaired in any way at all (which is most people), then gluten makes its way through the stomach lining and into the blood stream and is then stored by the body in places like the thyroid gland (among many other places) and once there the body notices there is a foreign invader and starts attacking it. This is a big part of how we end up with 'autoimmune' issues, it's not actually the body attacking itself but instead things like gluten, soya and oxalates that are stored in these places because the body does not know what to do with them otherwise.

Soya – As mentioned above soya is stored by the body and causes the symptoms of autoimmune issues, so ALL forms (sauce, beans, tofu, etc) of soya (sorry I know this is hard for many plant-based people to hear) should be avoided. Not only does soya cause issues like this, but in fact it does other things too, so in a way it's much worse than gluten. Soya seriously effects our hormones (affecting fertility, increasing

miscarriages and much more), testosterone levels in men and even more potential concerns in growing children. It affects brain development and function in all of us, but again, especially children. And there is research now suggesting that eating a lot of soya could be adding to the levels of anxiety and depression.

Trans-fats / seed oils - Vegetable oils are nutritionally imbalanced, with a high level of omega-6 and they contain compounds that are believed to cause cancer and neurodegenerative disorders. I think most people know that they should avoid vegetable and sunflowers oils because of this, but this also means avoiding things made with them, like dairy-free margarines etc and junk foods (no matter if they are animal-based or plant-based, they are still junk and should be avoided). Coconut oil is the only exception to this and does not contain high amounts of omega 6.

A diet very high in carbohydrates – As I mentioned previously, we are not ‘designed’ to be carbohydrate/sugars burners, we have adapted to burn carbs as most people do not have enough fats in their diet. For our bodies to work optimally and in fact easily we should aim for low carbohydrate, higher fat and protein diets (no matter if we are vegan, carnivore or something in between). It’s essential to consume as many good fats as possible, as making energy from glucose produces lots of free radicals, whereas making energy from ketones reduces production of free radicals. Starting your day with carbs/sugars will put you straight into a blood sugar spike and make you search all day for a new spike (fruits, candies, junk food, soda’s, chocolate or just many more carbs). Consider a breakfast of eggs or dairy (if you eat them) or avocados and coconut oil (or better still MCT oil) if not. This is not just an important factor in overall health but it’s especially important if you have hormone, mood or energy issues).

Oxalates – A diet very high in oxalates (a plant chemical/poison) can affect every area of health is not recommended of anyone, no matter what diet or lifestyle they follow. I would highly recommend where possible avoiding a lot of high oxalates foods. 150mg of oxalates in a day is the recommended maximum amount, yet many plant-based (and many non-plant-based) people are eating 200x this a day (as was I). After all the ‘work’ I have done on myself over the years I was shocked at how insanely good I felt in all areas of my life when I gave up all the high oxalate foods. You’ll find that online lists of high oxalate foods all contradict each other, however Sally Norton (details in the resources section at the end) has a data companion on her website where every single thing within it has been lab tested (recently) to establish accurate levels. Typically, these are the high offenders; sweet and normal potatoes, brown rice, dark chocolate, green/white/black tea, beetroot, chard, spinach, rhubarb, gooseberries, figs, most seeds (especially sesame seeds) and most nuts (especially almonds). And, if you are juicing or smoothing any of these items you make the oxalate damage even higher. If possible, I would switch these items out for pretty much anything else to reduce your oxalate load so it does not cause long term health issues.

Some important things to consider for overall health...

Gut health - The majority of our immune system cells are found in our digestive tract. Also, most of our serotonin is produced in the gut. So, a healthy gut means a healthy immune system and better mood. Signs of an unhealthy gut are bloating, frequent constipation (not having a bowel movement every day), diarrhoea, regular pain or discomfort in any way.

Fermented Foods & Drinks – If you know me, you will know I'm pretty obsessed by fermented foods and drinks and how they can help our health. I've mentioned already that many of them may contain additional nutrients that you will find harder to get without them. But they also help heal the digestive system, help the uptake of nutrients from other foods, are powerful detoxifiers and give you millions of pre and probiotics. Make sure what you are buying are raw/unpasteurised though, as many supermarket options have been cooked to make them shelf-stable and have very little, if any goodness left in them (and probably extra sugars added to). There are tons of recipes on my website, in my books and on my Instagram page if you wish to make your own. I would aim to make seasonal ferments, from local produce (the reason for this is explained later in this guide) to best benefit from them.

Fasting – Fasting is only recommended if you believe you are you really are getting adequate nutrients from your diet, and you do not believe you have a dysregulated nervous system. A dysregulated nervous system shows up as stress, anxiety, depression, overthinking, overwhelm and overanalysing. If this is, you I would avoid any kind of fasting because it will only put your body deeper into survival mode and not help heal it. Three healthy meals a day is more supportive for you until you learn to regulate your nervous system once more.

And, I would not recommend any kind of juice fast, not only because of the potential high oxalates you can consume during these, but because your blood sugar level will become seriously screwed up whilst doing this. Our blood sugars often spike more from fruit juices (even homemade) than for processed white sugars (crazy I know).

Seasonal/local living – Living seasonally and locally is REALLY underrated, it's a simple thing we can do to optimise our health and the health of the planet. Simply put, we do not have the right microbiome to consume foods (or herbs/supplements) from other parts of the World and, also out of season. We often forget we are animals and as such we adapt to our surroundings, as these surroundings change with the cycles and seasons of life. Eating foods in season gives you the nutrients you require in the seasons you require it and gives your digestive system a rest from certain foods as and when needed (lessening food intolerances and any effects of plant poison's/protections). We compromise our gut health eating foods out of season and

from other parts of the World because we do not have the correct microbiome to deal with these foods in that time and place. Not only this, but foods that can easily benefit the people of a certain area where they grow, can do the opposite for people consuming those same foods when shipped halfway across the World. What I mean by this is, if the locals in South America eat their own bananas, then they can give them certain nutrients they need for that climate, they may even help protect them from the sun and reduce inflammation. However, if someone from Europe eats those same banana's here it is believed they can compromise their microbiome, cause inflammation and even make them burn easier in the sun. We are not 'designed' to utilise foods out of season and from other places in fact they could be harming our health (and are definitely harming the health of the planet).

This is the same for herbs and supplements. We hear of the magical abilities of certain herbs/supplements and assume they will do these things for us. However, it's unlikely they do (for the same reasons as above). You will find though local plants that will do the same things and in a way more in balance with you and your microbiome. So, for instance if you are taking ashwagandha from India, maybe look for Milky Oats from Europe instead.

Circadian rhythms – This is the body's internal (natural) inner clock. Making sure we remember we are animals and need to be connected to the earth and not in our boxes in front of our screens all the time is one of the most important things you can focus on for your health. Possibly even more so than diet! We are meant to be connected to the earth as much as possible, so if you cannot get outside most days with your feet on the ground then sleeping on a grounding sheet is an excellent idea, as is using blue-light blocking glasses when looking at screens (red for evenings and yellow/white for day time) and not looking at screen late at night or very early in the morning. Making sure you get up for sunrise and go to bed as close to sunset (I know this isn't always doable in winter) as you can manage and not very late at night is very helpful too. Getting the sun on you skin (or even just day light) without suncream as often as possible and never wearing sunglasses (so your eyes get sun) help regulate our circadian rhythm too. When we 'behave' in a more natural way like this as much as possible it helps to improve metabolise, digestion, immunity, hormones, sleep, mood, energy and pretty much everything else in our body.

Nervous System Regulation – This to is so incredibly important to the overall health of everyone on the planet. If we are in an almost constant state of dysregulation (anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, overthinking etc) then none of the bodies natural processes work properly because it's stuck in fight, flight, freeze. When the body is in this place it draws energy and resources from other systems of the body, which is why things like your digestive system becomes impaired if you have been stuck in this place for a while. If you feel this, is you, then I urge you to focus some energy on regulating your nervous

system as much as possible, but definitely before meals and sleep to make sure you can better uptake the nutrients you require from the food you are eating and also so you sleep better too. Here is a video of some super simple things you can do to help regulate your nervous system: <https://youtu.be/HpmjrQNWFP4> I also have an eBook and an eCourse on my website about this.

Additional Resources:

I share the below not to 'turn' you away from plant-based lifestyles, but so you can understand the importance of certain nutrients and not having certain antinutrients and can do something about the one's the really resonate with you before the onset of any potential chronic illnesses. Wishing you much health and happiness for many years to come, Faith

Vegetarianism Explained – Making an Informed Decision by Dr Natasha Campbell-McBride <https://amzn.eu/d/4zloquM>

Put Your Heart in Your Mouth by Dr Natasha Campbell-McBride <https://amzn.eu/d/1pxXYql>

Toxic Superfoods by Sally K Norton <https://amzn.eu/d/2nHbYoN>

My recent interview with Sally K Norton <https://youtu.be/dmLCBvxFOes> Remember when watching this, it's just a nudge towards a more natural and ancestral way of eating and not 'another' new diet to follow.

The Plant Paradox by Dr Steven R Gundry <https://amzn.eu/d/2XVThyt>

The Vegetarian Myth by Lierre Keith <https://amzn.eu/d/41yOjZ5> I share this only for anyone that really wants to understand the potential health/environmental implications of this way of life.

My recent Interview with Lierre Keith <https://youtu.be/uAxOhAcuE-s>

The Whole Soy Story: <https://amzn.eu/d/3TI00hZ>

Change Your Diet, Change Your Mind book by Dr Georgia Ede <https://amzn.eu/d/bJqJ8kS>

An interview with Dr Georgia Ede and Nutrition with Judy about 5 most harmful foods for causing brain diseases https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=RwReG_KqCss

Primal Fat Burner – Going Beyond the Ketogenic diet by Nora Gedgudas <https://amzn.eu/d/0eJQ9Yl>

Why Vegans Have Smaller Brains & How Cows Reverse Climate Change <https://amzn.eu/d/5d0iQbh> I know the title is offensive, but they do talk a lot about the research and important of certain nutrients for brain health.