10 Tips for Eating Vegan or Vegetarian

Look for V (vegetarian) and V+ (vegan) labels on menus across campus! Looking for vegan variety? In addition to our many custom-made options that can be created vegan, check out Woodworth Commons' homestyle area for a growing number of vegan entrees. Find daily menus at bsu.edu/dining > Nutrition Information.

Boost Up Your Day with Energy

It's important for students following vegan and vegetarian diets to pay attention to the amount of calories they are taking in. The recommended intake of calories for moderately active students (30-60 minutes of activity per day) is 2,200 calories (female) or 2,800 (male). Calories are needed to fuel your body in order to keep your mind sharp, study effectively, and stay awake in class. Good sources of energy include beans and peas, nuts, dried fruits, whole grains, and seeds. For lacto-vegetarians, dairy products including cheese and yogurt are also good sources.

Think About Protein

Getting enough protein is essential for vegan and vegetarian diets. Protein is needed to assist with the overall health of the body such as hormone balance, enzyme and antibody production, and bone health. To obtain an adequate amount of protein, incorporate plant based foods, such as beans, nuts, peas, and soy products. Black Bean Burgers, trail mix, Gardein meat-alternatives, quinoa, and tofu are all great protein options and are available at many of our dining locations.

Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

When you create your next customized sandwich, incorporate whole grains, which contain B vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Do this by reading nutrition labels on NetNutriton for words like "multi-grain", "whole wheat flour", or "cracked wheat". However, vegans need to be aware of ingredients such as egg and honey in their bread. Wheatberry bread and wheat wraps are both great options that contain 50% whole grains.

Meals in Moderation

Eating in moderation means to eat as much food as your body needs without surpassing the recommended daily consumption of food. The problem is that everyone has their own perspective of how much food they can take in. The key is to eat enough food to make your hunger pass without over eating. This will make you feel satisfied after a meal, instead of feeling bloated and stuffed from eating too much.

Eat Those Veggies

Vegetable are a great source of fiber, potassium, and vitamin A, E and C, which are needed for overall maintenance and health of the body. Try to widen your horizon by eating different vegetables like Brussels sprouts, sugar snap peas, asparagus, or edamame, which are offered at Ball State Dining locations. By mixing up your vegetables, your body gets a variety of healthy nutrients, which can provide protection against some cancers and reduce risk of heart attack, obesity, and type-2 diabetes.

Treat Yourself to Fruit

Eating fruit is a great, guilty-free way to treat yourself after studying. Fruits contain many nutrients that are important to keep our bodies healthy including potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and folate. Fruit also contain natural sugars that help to satisfy your body's craving for sweets. Incorporate fruits like blueberries, citrus fruit, dried cranberries, or strawberries to your daily recommended serving of 2-1/2 cups.

Build Strong Bones with Calcium

Milk products are a great source of calcium for lacto-vegetarians. However, if you are vegan try foods like calcium-fortified soymilk or breakfast cereals, orange juice, dark leafy greens, or even tofu made with calcium sulfate. Use your creativity to make a healthy, calcium rich, meals such as a tofu stir-fry with broccoli and celery or a bowl of cereal with soymilk.

Decide Which Fats to Eat

Deciphering between bad fats that increase cholesterol or good fats, that protect your heart and support overall health can seem daunting. Good fats are found in various nuts, which are also a great source of protein. Good fats such as nuts, avocado, and olives are needed to fight fatigue, control weight, and help you stay on top of your mental game. Limit foods such as butter and cheese if you are lacto-vegetarian and choose packaged snack foods carefully. Assorted grab and go bars with nuts contain saturated fats.

Obtain your Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is naturally found in animal products and is an important vitamin that helps the nervous system function properly. Vegans and vegetarians need to reach out to fortified cereal, tofu, or soy products to obtain this vitamin. Otherwise taking a multi-vitamin supplement with vitamin B12 or a vitamin B12 supplement may be necessary. Always talk with your doctor before starting any dietary supplements.

Adequate Zinc

Zinc is needed for the body's defense system to function properly. More than two-thirds of American diets obtain their zinc from animal sources. Vegans and vegetarians can alter their diet to obtain zinc by eating more legumes, germ and bran of whole grains, tofu, seeds, and nuts; however, plant sources of zinc can be hard for the body to absorb. You may have to find a multi-vitamin supplement to obtain your adequate amount of zinc, but make sure to always consult your doctor before starting any dietary supplements.