



The Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet

Many people make the switch to a vegetarian diet because of the potential health benefits. The 2009 American Dietetic Association position statement is “appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.”

According to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, vegetarian diets are beneficial in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases such as:

- **Type II Diabetes:** Research suggests a predominately plant based diet can reduce the risk for Type II Diabetes. Eating high fiber vegetables and whole grains and legumes (beans) helps to control blood sugar levels.
- **Cardiovascular Disease:** Analysis of multiple studies involving more than 76,000 people show that vegetarians were on average 25% less likely to die of heart disease. The saturated fat found in animal products can raise cholesterol and clog arteries.
- **Obesity:** Vegetarians tend to consume a lower proportion of calories from fat and fewer overall calories, and more fiber, potassium and vitamin C than non-vegetarians. These characteristics, plus lifestyle factors, may contribute to the lack of obesity among vegetarians.
- **Cancer:** There is evidence that suggest that eating lots of fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of developing cancers. A vegetarian diet can make it easier to get the recommended minimum of servings of fruits and vegetables. By cutting down on red meat, you can eliminate a risk factor for colon cancer. Vegetarians usually have lower levels of potentially carcinogenic substances in their colons.

If you're curious about adopting a vegetarian diet, try out our vegetarian menu! If you are eating at a dining site, speak with your site manager. If you are receiving Meals on Wheels call 525-0143 ext. 2 and ask to switch.