**Myth #1: A Vegetarian/Vegan Diet is not safe for a Growing Child**

A well-planned vegetarian/vegan diet is safe for people of all ages, including babies, children, teenagers, pregnant mothers, and adults. Consuming a variety of nutritious plant foods provides all of the nutrients children need during this important time of growth.

**Myth #2: It is Hard for a Vegetarian/Vegan to Eat Enough Protein**

It is very easy to consume enough protein on a plant-based diet, as long as a person eats a variety of foods throughout the day. Almost all foods contain some protein, except alcohol, sugar, and fat. Good sources of protein include: legumes (lentils, dried beans, peas), soy-foods (tofu, tempeh, edamame), seitan, meat substitutes (veggie burgers, plant-based crumbles), milk (dairy and non-dairy), nuts, seeds, grains (rice, millet, quinoa), breads, and vegetables.

Protein requirements can be met when a variety of plant foods are eaten and overall calorie needs are met. All of the essential amino acids can be eaten throughout the day and there is no need to ‘combine proteins’ at the same meal.

**Myth #3: You Have to Eat Fake Meat**

Being vegetarian does not mean you have to resort to only eating fake meat products. While meat analogs (fake meats) are becoming increasingly popular and can fit into a healthy diet, there are many whole, plant-based food options that are sure to please any palate. It’s important to note that not all fake meats analogs are created equal – be sure to read the ingredients and nutrition fact labels to ensure they are made from quality ingredients, and are not too high in salt, sugar, or saturated fat.


**Myth #4: Going Vegetarian/Vegan means you have to give up most foods**

Calcium needs can easily be met on plant-based diet. This couldn’t be further from the truth. While you won’t be eating as many animal products, vegetarians and vegans have an enormous amount of nutrient-dense food options to choose from. Giving up animal products will allow you to explore new foods.

A vegan diet is typically rich in whole grains and grain products (brown rice, millet, barley, oats, whole wheat bread), a variety of fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes (such as lentils,
Lifestyle factors that contribute to poor bone health include high sodium intake, extreme weight loss, alcohol, and smoking.

Naturally calcium-rich foods include: leafy green vegetables (collards, kale, mustard and turnip greens), broccoli, bok choy, calcium-set tofu, almonds, and blackstrap molasses. Calcium-fortified foods include: certain brands of juices (apple, orange, and vegetable juice blends), breakfast cereals, protein bars, margarine, and many non-dairy soy, rice or almond beverages.

**Myth #7: Eating Soy Increases Risk of Cancer**

Soy is a good source of nutrients that has many health benefits. Studies show that eating soy foods early in life decreases risk of breast cancer in adults. Studies suggest that children and/or teens who consume as little as one serving of soy daily decrease their risk of breast cancer later in life by 25 to 50 percent. Soy has been found to be helpful for other conditions. Soy may be helpful in reducing heart disease risk, relieving hot flashes, preventing/treating prostate cancer, and promoting bone health for postmenopausal women.

A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you develop a healthy vegetarian eating plan that meets your needs.

To find an RDN in your area, visit: [https://vegetariannutrition.net/find-a-registered-dietitian/](https://vegetariannutrition.net/find-a-registered-dietitian/).