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Is A Vegan Diet Healthy For Teens

A well-planned vegan diet can be a healthy dietary choice for anyone and at any stage of development. A vegan teen is no less healthy than a meat-eating teen. It's about making healthy food choices and teaching your teen how to make them.

Teens, who are expressing to their parents a desire to adopt a plant-based diet are for the most part quite proactive in educating themselves about veganism. In fact, it was probably during the course of learning about veganism that they independently made the decision to adopt such a lifestyle.

Whether it's out of concern for the environment, animal rights or health reasons more and more teens are announcing to their parents that they want to become vegans. If you are the parent of one of these teens there is no need to go into a fit. In fact, this decision could not have come at a better time. Sure you're concerned that making such a dietary change may negatively impact your teens' growth and development.

However, this couldn't be any further from the truth. A vegan teen is also a very health conscious teen. Therefore, a vegan teen will take greater care to adopt a well-planned diet

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over their meat-eating counterparts who are more likely to snack on pizza, hot dogs and sugary snacks instead of fruits and vegetables.

That said, the best way to respond to a teen who decides to become vegan is to be supportive. Educating yourself about this dietary choice may even help you become more health conscious about your own eating habits. We learn as much, if not more, from our children as they learn from us so why not let this be another opportunity to learn and bond with your teen.

Sure, as a parent you will still have some concerns such as whether your vegan teen will get the appropriate amount of vitamins and nutrients. Well whole grains, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and veggie meats are all excellent sources of protein. Additionally, beans, cashews, raisins, spinach, tempeh and tomato juice are packed with iron. You might also be concerned about your teen getting vitamin B-12. No need to worry about that either because he or she can easily do so by eating fortified cereals, fortified soy milk or taking multivitamins. If that's not enough, numerous studies have shown that eliminating dairy products and meat, while eating nuts and whole grains will improve cardiovascular health. As

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you can see, this dietary transition is not the end of the world. Johnny will still be Johnny and Susie will still be the same Susie, just with improved cardiovascular health and lowered risk of contracting several other deadly diseases.

An unbalanced diet whether vegetarian or non- can be unhealthy. However, a vegan or vegetarian diet can effectively provide your teens' body with all the nutrients needed and it is relatively easy to plan a balanced vegan diet.

Amirah Bellamy is a Vegan Transitional Coach, Vegan Fitness Meal Planning Expert, and Author. To learn more about her fabulous Vegetarian Meal Plans and Healthy Eating eBook or to INSTANTLY grab her FREE Vegetarian Starter Kit go to www.AmirahBFit.com

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