



# **Vegan – high calorie and high protein diet sheet**

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## The importance of eating well

It is important to try and eat well to provide your body with energy and to help you feel stronger. This is particularly important during times of illness or medical treatment, if you have a poor appetite or have had unplanned weight loss.

This is because during times of illness or medical treatment, your body uses more calories and protein to heal and recover. Unplanned weight loss can then occur if your body is not receiving enough calories or protein.

This booklet will provide advice on how to increase the calorie and protein content of your diet through a vegan diet. A high-calorie/ high-protein diet will provide your body with more energy and help prevent weight and muscle loss.

If you are on a special diet (e.g. for diabetes or high cholesterol) this information may not be appropriate for you or if you have other factors (e.g. taste changes, swallowing difficulties) affecting your dietary intake please ask your doctor or GP to refer you to a dietitian for further support.

## Top tips to help improve your appetite and follow a high-protein and high calorie diet

- Try to eat little and often, have six small meals a day or eat every 2–3 hours
- Drink regular amounts of fluids, but avoid drinking large amounts right before a meal, as this may fill you up
- Try to have nourishing drinks throughout the day (booklet will give you lots of ideas)
- Add extra calories and protein to your meals/snacks/drinks (booklet will give you lots of ideas)
- Keep a store cupboard of easily prepared food – vegan cereal/nut bars, ricecakes, crisps, dairy free milk

- If your energy levels change throughout the week; try to make the most of the 'good days' by preparing extra meals that you can keep in your fridge/freezer to have on the 'bad days'
- It is important to make the most of moments / days when your appetite may be better and you feel most well, even if this is not at your usual meal time
- Avoid low-fat and reduced calorie varieties of foods e.g. light yoghurts, unsweetened dairy-free milk, diet drinks, light spreads, as the aim is to increase your calorie intake as much as possible
- Make use of meal home delivery services or supermarkets that offer delivery services to make getting the food you need easier
- Choose food that you enjoy and are more likely to eat

Aim to eat a varied diet, this can be achieved by ensuring we eat starchy foods, protein and fruit and vegetables (please see below).

## Starchy foods

Try to include starchy foods with each meal, for example:

- Bread
- Potatoes
- Rice, pasta, maize or corn meal
- Green banana or plantain
- Crackers, crisp bread or oatcakes
- Chapattis
- Couscous
- Quinoa
- Paratha
- Chapatti
- Noodles

## Protein

Try to include a high protein food with each meal (two to three times per day), and try and eat as much of the protein food as possible.

- Lentils
- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Nuts
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Meat alternatives e.g. based on soya protein, pea protein, vegan Quorn
- Nut butters and hummous

## Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. It is important to eat fruit and vegetables, however they are low in calories and protein and can be filling, therefore consider fortifying these food items using ideas on the next page.

## Milk alternatives

Aim to choose the sweetened/flavoured versions for more calories, and choose the high energy milk for example soya milk, or oat milk. Ensure you choose a plant milk that has added calcium and vitamins.

## Fortifying your snacks, meals and drinks

Meals, snacks and drinks can be made more nutritious without increasing the amount you need to eat, but by fortifying them or enriching them. This is done by adding foods high in calories and/or protein. Every mouthful should be as nourishing as possible, remember to not choose diet or 'light' food options.

The following are examples of ways you can fortify your meals and drinks:

## **Using protein powders**

The calories and protein can be increased by making fortified milk by using vegan protein powders on the market. You can mix 1 tablespoon of pea protein powder into a cup of milk (200ml) to increase the calories and protein content. Vanilla essence/extract can be used to help improve the flavour. This milk can be used to make milkshakes, porridge, sauces, soups and can be added to breakfast cereals.

## **Vegan cheese**

- Grated vegan cheese – add to mashed potatoes, soup, baked beans, jacket potato or pasta topping
- Add to sauces e.g. vegan cheese sauce made with milk alternatives
- Melt on toast

## **Dairy-free margarine, butter and oil**

Avoid low-fat, reduced and light spreads

- Spread margarine thickly on bread, toast, crackers, scones, crumpets or chapatti
- Mash plenty of margarine, or oil into potatoes, or melt onto boiled and jacket potatoes
- Stir margarine, or oil into hot pasta, rice or vegetables
- Add to stews, soups, dhal or curries
- Fry foods instead of grilling or baking

## **Vegan cream (e.g. soya/coconut/oat cream)**

- Add to porridge, soups, sauces and puddings
- Use as a topping for cereal and fruit
- Cream can be added to hot and cold drinks as a topping

## **Sugar/jam/maple syrup\***

Sugar, jam, and syrup add useful calories to meals

- Add sugar and syrup to tea, coffee, smoothies, milkshakes
- Add to stewed fruit, soya puddings, dairy-free puddings, yoghurts
- Add to breakfast cereals, toast, pancakes

## **Nuts/seeds**

- Add to cereal, pasta, salads, sauces
- Make granola bars or flapjacks

## **Beans and lentils**

- Add additional beans and lentils to casseroles, soups, pasta

All foods with \* can be high in sugar and may need to be limited in those with Type 2 Diabetes.

## **Meal ideas**

### **Breakfast**

- Cereal or porridge with fortified plant milk, add sugar\*/syrup\*/nuts/seeds
- Toast with margarine, jam\* or peanut butter
- Pancakes with golden syrup\*/nuts
- Glass of fortified plant milk with vegan biscuits\*
- Vegan alternative meat sandwich slices with toast and margarine
- Beans on toast with margarine and vegan cheese
- Scrambled tofu with toast, beans and vegan cheese

### **Main meals**

- Jacket potato with margarine, vegan cheese, baked beans
- Lentil/chickpea/tofu curry with vegan cream and rice with added margarine
- Pasta in sauce with beans and pulses and vegan cheese
- Vegan sausage casserole with potatoes
- Vegan meat alternative with fried chips, vegetables with added margarine, vegan coleslaw

## **Puddings**

- Vegan ice cream such as soy ice cream\*
- Slice of vegan cake with soya cream\*
- Vegan yoghurt with added syrup\*/jam\*/nuts
- Vegan rice pudding\*
- Tinned fruits with vegan cream\*

## **Snacks**

- Pitta bread and hummus
- Vegan biscuits
- Dark chocolate / vegan chocolate\*
- Fruit with nut butters e.g. apple and peanut butter
- Trail mix – nuts, seeds & dried fruits
- Vegan crackers / tortilla chips with guacamole

All foods with \* can be high in sugar and may need to be limited in those with Type 2 Diabetes.

## **Nutritional supplement products**

Your dietitian may suggest that you temporarily have a nutritional supplement drink on prescription, to top up what you are already eating. Advice will be given on the best type of nutritional supplement and how many you should aim to have each day.

### **Supplement tips:**

- Serve chilled
- Blend with vegan ice-cream and fruit to make a milkshake

If, after following this advice in this leaflet you are continuing to lose weight, or if there is no improvement with your appetite or diet, please contact your GP for further advice or help.

When your appetite returns, and your weight is right for you, please ask your dietitian, GP or practice nurse for information about healthy eating.

## **Additional tips to help improve appetite**

- Larger portions of food can put you off eating altogether; you can always go back for a second helping
- Take time to relax between meals or courses
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- If food tastes different to you, add herbs and spices to increase flavour
- If you are feeling nauseous, keep away from cooking smells, opt for colder foods or ready meals which produce less cooking smells
- Dry foods, e.g. toast, crackers or plain biscuits, may help prevent nausea
- Try to always have something at meal times, and avoid missing meals
- Enjoy meals with friends or family – eating socially can sometimes help you to eat more or more regularly if you are able to
- Regular exercise where possible can help increase your appetite and improve your strength – start slowly and gradually increase the intensity

## **Contact details:**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Telephone: **0121 371 3485**

Heartlands Hospital, Good hope Hospital or Solihull Hospital

Telephone: **0121 424 2673**

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email **[patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk)**.

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**Dietitians**

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