

# Vegetarian Eating Pattern

## FOOD PANTRY TIP SHEET

A **vegetarian eating pattern** is made up of mostly plant-based foods (e.g. fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) and avoids meat, poultry, and seafood. Some may also choose to avoid eggs and dairy, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese.

Animal-based foods provide important nutrients and minerals the body needs. It is important to be mindful of foods to consume in order to stay healthy on a vegetarian diet. However, a well-planned vegetarian diet can be nutritious, taste great, and may provide health benefits to prevent certain diseases. If your client has concerns about dietary choices, encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider to be referred to a registered dietitian.



## Foods to Consume to Maintain a Balanced Diet

- » Fit in **more colorful fruits and vegetables**: especially orange, red and dark-green for important vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Most dark-green vegetables like broccoli and collard greens provide calcium.
- » Choose **more whole grains** such as whole wheat, brown rice, corn, and oats over refined grains. Some grains like quinoa and millet are higher in protein.
- » Enjoy a **variety of protein**: such as beans, peas and lentils as well as nuts, seeds and soy products, such as tofu and soymilk (*if desired, eggs and dairy are also great protein choices*).
- » Don't forget **heart-healthy fats** from avocados, nuts, seeds, olives, and some vegetable oils (*if desired, canned fish such as tuna or salmon also provide healthy fats*).

## What to Watch For on Labels and Ingredient Lists

- » Opt for fresh fruit or fruits packed in **100% juice**.
- » Choose **vegetables with no added salt** (fresh, frozen, or canned).
- » Choose **canned and frozen goods with no salt added (or low-sodium)**.
- » Check for **non-vegetarian ingredients** (e.g. beef or chicken stock in canned soups).
- » Limit highly processed foods made with **hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils** (*can be found in snack crackers and chips*).
- » Limit **added sugars** (*can be found in fruits packed in syrup, sugary cereals, and baked goods*).