

Changing to a vegetarian or vegan



A diagnosis of bowel cancer can prompt a desire to change your diet. If you choose to change to a vegetarian or vegan diet, you can still get the the protein you need by combining a wide range of wholegrains and beans or pulses.

If your appetite is poor or your diet restricted, you need to make sure you are getting the full range of nutrients you need in your diet every day.

Always consult a healthcare professional before taking any vitamins or supplements.

You can maintain a healthy and varied diet if you choose to become vegetarian or vegan. Cheese, eggs, beans, yoghurt, nuts and seeds are good protein alternatives to meat. Vegetarian versions of common foods are available in most supermarkets – e.g. sausages, burgers, bacon, cheese, haggis, turkey and chicken made from Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) can be quite easy to find.

Vegetarian or vegan diet



Alternatives to dairy

- » For vegans, most supermarkets now stock oat milk, soya milk or rice milk which can be used anywhere that cow's milk is used. Choose the ones with added calcium to ensure you are getting a good supply.



Alternatives to meat

Good sources of protein include:

- » Tofu
- » Eggs
- » Cheese
- » Milk
- » Yoghurt
- » Nuts and nut spreads (e.g. peanut butter)
- » Lentils and beans (e.g. kidney, cannellini, butter beans)
- » Seeds (e.g. pumpkin and sunflower)
- » TVP or Quorn (e.g. vegetarian sausages or burgers)
- » Quinoa
- » Miso

Combining beans and wholegrains ensures that vegetarians and vegans are getting the complete range of proteins. Try the ideas below:



Ideal meals for vegetarians or vegans include:

- » Beans on wholegrain toast
 - » Lentil bolognese or lasgane with wholemeal pasta
 - » Hummus on oatcakes
 - » Vegetable and bean soups
 - » Tofu or bean stir fries or curries
 - » Shepherd's pie made with beans or TVP
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tip

There are vegetarian and vegan societies and magazines where you can get great recipe ideas.
www.vegsoc.org and www.vegansociety.com

case study

Bowel cancer survivor **Rachel Vince**

Bowel cancer survivor Rachel Vince stopped eating red meat after her diagnosis:

“ I found that there is a lot of evidence that a plant-based diet is best for preventing cancer and its recurrence. As a result, I have cut out most meats and fish (I do have a portion of organic chicken or oily fish about once a week). I also decided to cut out dairy products. I also try to minimise the amount of refined sugar I eat and avoid processed food generally, as well as buying organic where I can. I find that by eating a wide range of plant-based foods, I get plenty of protein, calcium and vitamins in my diet. I do take supplements, just to top up my probiotic and essential fatty acid intake each day.

I have noticed that with these changes to my diet, I am more energised than I have been for years and I do believe that it helped me recover from my latest operation relatively quickly. It has also given me some power back. By taking control of my diet, as part of an integrated healthy lifestyle, I am doing all I can to stop the cancer coming back again. I have become a massive fan of juicing and making my own smoothies – a great way to get a wide variety of fruit and veg a day.

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