

important to note that Vitamin D is essential to help the body absorb calcium.

Potassium - vegetables, potatoes, nuts and seeds.

Zinc - wholemeal grains, beans, sweetcorn and nuts.

Every effort should be made to obtain all essential nutrients naturally from your food. Supplements should not be necessary if a well-balanced diet is chosen: evidence suggests the body does not utilise the isolated nutrients from supplements as well as those obtained directly from whole foods.

Eating as much food as possible in its freshest raw state naturally ensures that nutrient content, particularly of substances destroyed or diminished by cooking, is maximised. Many people promote raw food diets as the route to increased health, energy and vitality. A raw diet can include sprouted beans and seeds, an excellent way to include really fresh, home-grown produce into the diet, even for people who do not have access to land to grow their own food. Similarly, nuts and seeds can be included whole, grated as toppings, blended with water to make milks and creams, or mixed with other ingredients to make delicious savoury and sweet raw food dishes.

Raw food can take less time to prepare, consumes much less fossil fuel based energy and could lead to the planting of increased numbers of fruit and nut trees, thereby also having a number of environmental benefits. Within MCL, we promote a diet based on foods that can be grown in a person's home climate and, with raw food, as any other form of vegan diet we might promote, we recommend people avoid foods that have been transported long distances around the globe in line with the MCL *Food Target* (see our *Food & Agriculture* leaflet and the website).

As with all dietary changes, individuals need to find the type of vegan diet that suits their own needs and helps them achieve and maintain good health and to make the transition to that diet at a pace that suits them.

Vegan mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their babies whenever possible, as this provides the most balanced form of nutrition possible for the baby and also provides protective health benefits, such as reduced risk of breast cancer for the mother.

Children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and older people have specific dietary needs and a healthy vegan diet can safely provide for these. For further information about these requirements, please contact MCL at the address below. www.mclveganway.org.uk

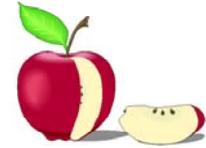
The MOVEMENT for COMPASSIONATE LIVING
105 Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT, UK

☎ 0845 4584717 or 01639 841223



Health, Diet and Nutrition

All animals depend directly or indirectly on plant products for their food. It is now accepted that humans can maintain excellent health without any animal products and this is endorsed by a number of reputable scientific studies.



The world is currently in the middle of a global epidemic of diet-related illness. A high intake of animal products has been scientifically related to the prevalence of coronary heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Worldwide, a billion people are classified as obese. Many children classified as morbidly obese will die before their parents. The model of the modern western diet seems to be built on a double death wish - that of fattening up both food animals and humans.

MCL promotes a well-balanced vegan diet that can provide all essential nutrients to maintain good health and is based on crops that can be grown in a person's home climate wherever possible, reducing the distance from field to fork.

Conventional farming has become a massive user of industrial chemicals - hormones, antibiotics, insecticides, pesticides and other toxic substances, and residues from these routinely find their way into animal derived food products and food crops, affecting both the environment and human health. Animal wastes, used in conventional and, indeed, organic agriculture, can also be a source of pathogens in the food chain that may result in dangerous and even life-threatening diseases in humans. The vast majority of cases of food poisoning have their source in foods from animals. MCL recommends that food is obtained from sources where artificial chemicals and animal products are not used in production. If you can grow at least some of your own foods using vegan-organic methods, so much the better. People need to understand that they do not need animal products to maintain good health and that there are in fact significant health risks in consuming these items.

A well-balanced vegan diet provides many of the most recent dietary recommendations of the World Health Organisation, with reduced saturated fat and harmful cholesterol, increased levels of fruit and vegetables, and the higher levels of dietary fibre which protect against coronary heart disease and some cancers. Indeed, a further endorsement of the health benefits of the vegan diet is its adoption by an increasing number of highly successful athletes.

The MOVEMENT for COMPASSIONATE LIVING

More and more dairy-free food products are becoming available and this reflects the growing rates of dairy allergy.

It is possible to exist on a vegan diet based on foods imported from long distances around the world and processed foods such as ready-made meals from supermarkets and health stores, and some vegans choose this path. MCL does not recommend this type of diet, which will often be high in the saturated fats, sugar and salt of more conventional diets and could therefore lead to similar kinds of health problems. Foods, such as fruit and vegetables, transported long distances will be lower in the vital natural nutrients than crops grown locally, by natural animal- and chemical-free methods.

Here are some basic principles for healthy, well-balanced vegan nutrition:

- 🍷 Eat a varied diet, choosing the correct balance of foods from each food group (see below).
- 🍷 Eat as many foods as possible that have not been processed or refined, choose fresh vegetables and fruit, pulses, whole grains or whole grain flours, locally grown where possible.
- 🍷 Ensure that the diet includes at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- 🍷 Eat a good proportion of chosen foods raw, rather than cooked.
- 🍷 If choosing cooked food, try to prepare food yourself rather than buying ready-made meals that are more likely to be high in unhealthy ingredients and which will have lost food value during processing and storage.



Food groups:

- 🍷 Fruit and vegetables: eat at least 5 portions daily (potatoes are not counted in this group as they are starchy foods). These foods provide vitamins A, C and K, anti-oxidants, fibre, iron, iodine and potassium.
- 🍷 Protein foods - eat 2 to 3 portions of protein rich foods each day as these help to build body tissue. Home-grown sources of protein include beans such as haricots, broad, runner and field beans, nuts such as hazels, almonds, walnuts, pine and chestnuts and seeds such as sunflower and pumpkin. Across the globe, many cultures have traditionally eaten some form of bean and grain foods together. It has been scientifically proven that such combinations provide a balance of the essential amino acids in protein foods that can be more readily utilised by the body. These foods do not have to be eaten together at the same meal, but if taken within a 48 hour period will combine during the process of digestion to provide the body with best quality plant-based proteins. This group of foods also supplies vitamin E, calcium, iron, zinc, selenium and fibre.
- 🍷 Starchy foods provide energy. You should try to eat five portions of foods

such as bread, cereals and potatoes each day. Home-grown cereal foods include grains such as wheat, rye, oats and barley, Starchy foods also provide sources of fibre, protein, B vitamins and calcium, iron and zinc.

- 🍷 Dairy replacement foods are often an important element of the vegan diet, providing protein, calcium and some vitamins. A variety of plant milks from sources other than soya, that can be more easily grown in the UK climate, are available. These include pea milk, oat milk and nut and grain milk replacements. Nutrient content will vary according to ingredients and fortification, but there is now a range of products available in health food shops and nut and seed milks can also be made at home. 2 - 3 portions of these foods are recommended daily.
- 🍷 Sugars and oils: these foods should be eaten only in small quantities each day. Intake of refined sugar should be avoided wherever possible. To sweeten food, choose natural sweeteners such as a concentrated fruit juice like apple or pear, or include dried fruits, such as raisins, sultanas, apples or apricots, in breakfasts, for snacks and packed lunches or in cooking. UK grown sources of oils could include sunflower, rapeseed, and nut oils such as hazel and walnut. Flax or hemp seed oil can be used in small quantities each day to provide balanced sources of important Omega-3 and -6 fatty acids. Oils also provide vitamins D and E.

Foods from these groups will help ensure a good range of the vitamins and minerals essential for good health. Trace elements are important for everyone and analyses of the diets of many typical modern meat-eaters reveal a deficiency of substances such as iron, calcium and some B vitamins. Here are some of the key vitamins and minerals you need to be aware of and include in your diet from a wide variety of sources that can be grown in the UK.

Vitamin A - from carrots, dark green leafy vegetables, apricots and tomatoes.

Vitamin B group - yeast extract, green vegetables, nuts, seeds, pulses, whole cereals. Vitamin B12 is available from fortified yeast extract.

Vitamin C - fresh fruit and vegetables, especially green vegetables, potatoes, blackcurrants and rosehips (seeds must be removed).

Vitamin D - available from the effect of sunlight on the skin and in fortified plant-based margarines.

Vitamin E - in vegetable oils, whole grain cereals, nuts and leafy greens.

Vitamin K - dark green leafy vegetables, fruit, vegetable oils and cereals.

Iron - dark leafy green vegetables, watercress, parsley, dried fruits especially apricots, pulses such as haricot beans, and grains. Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron from plant foods.

Calcium - pulses, dark green vegetables, dried fruits, nuts and seeds. It is