



Vegetarian Options for Babies Starting Solids

It is important that babies who are following a meat-free or animal-produce free diet eat foods that provide them with all the nutrients they need, especially protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.

Protein

Your baby is growing fast and protein is needed for this rapid growth.

Protein can be found in:

- Eggs
- Cheese and yogurt
- Nut and seed pastes e.g. peanut paste, hummus, tahini (if there is a family history of allergies, consult your health professional before introducing these foods)
- Legumes e.g. lentils, baked beans and split peas
- Soya products.

Iron

Your baby needs iron to help move oxygen around their body.

Good sources of iron are:

- Egg yolk
- Wholemeal bread
- Dark green vegetables e.g. spinach and broccoli
- Beans and lentils
- Dried fruit
- Fortified breakfast cereals.

Vitamin C increases the absorption of iron from plant foods, where possible foods rich in vitamin C should be served at every meal.



Vitamin C

Dietary sources of Vitamin C include:

- Fruits such as orange, mango, kiwifruit, tomato, strawberry
- Vegetables, especially green vegetables such as cabbage, capsicums, broccoli and spinach

Zinc

Zinc is essential for normal growth and development.

Good vegetarian sources of zinc are:

- Pulses (such as chickpeas, beans, peas & lentils)
- Wholemeal bread
- Egg yolk.

Please check with your Child Health Nurse regarding what age each of these foods can be introduced.



Vitamin B12

B12 is needed for the growth and division of cells. Babies who have a good intake of dairy foods and eggs will generally have an adequate Vitamin B12 intake.

However if your baby is a vegan, they may require a B12 supplement, so please contact your health professional to discuss this.

If you are choosing a vegan diet for your baby, it may be difficult for them to get the amount of iron and calcium they need.

Please consult with a health professional about food options if this is your choice for your baby.



This handout was prepared using information from various sources. References are available on request.

Contact ngala@ngala.com.au

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If you need further assistance contact the Ngala Helpline
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8am to 8pm 7 days a week
or see our website www.Ngala.com.au