



## Information For Vegetarians

A special diet is often a healthy diet—in fact, you may maintain a particular diet for health reasons—but it still may not provide all the nutrients you and your baby need while breastfeeding.

If your consumption of any major food group is limited, consider how you will replace the missing elements in your diet, and discuss your plans with your doctor or nutritionist. Breastfeeding women who do not eat meat, for example, must figure out how they will get sufficient protein for their babies and themselves.

As a vegetarian, you may already be familiar with ways to combine plant foods to meet your needs. You may get protein from rice, beans, eggs, nuts and nut butters, and meat substitutes. If you do not know all the healthy ways to compensate for lack of meat in your diet, consult a registered dietitian.

Ask your pediatrician whether you should take a daily vitamin/mineral supplement containing such elements as iron, zinc, and vitamin B12. It is essential that strict vegans (who avoid all animal products in their diet) take a vitamin B12 supplement, since this nutrient comes only from animal sources. Keep in mind that you will also need to make sure you consume enough calories to maintain your health—usually between 2,200 and 2,500 per day if you are of average build.

If you have any special concerns about your diet, your pediatrician may suggest you consult with a registered dietitian.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



