

Title:

Nothing Like A Vegetarian Diet

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Summary:

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Article Body:

These days you will find many people looking for options for making their diet rich in nutrients. One of the important driving forces behind a completely healthy diet is the food pyramid. The food pyramid is like a tool that will ensure that you have a healthy diet. There are different ways of illustrating a healthy diet plan but the most accepted way is in the shape of the pyramid. Food pyramids have been used by dieticians and even doctors for outlining different food groups as well as food choices, which will lay the foundation for a healthy intake of food if taken in right proportion.

The food pyramid

The food pyramid is in a triangular shape that highlights what all you need to focus on when you are selecting your food. At the base of the pyramid is the food that you need to take in bigger amounts and the food at the top of the pyramid should be consumed in lesser quantities. Today there are several types of food pyramids available and this might confuse you as you might not know which ones to choose. But the good thing is that the basic principles of different food pyramids are same and focus on the following:

1. Eat as much fruits as possible with fresh vegetables and whole grains
2. Reduce the intake of trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol as much as possible
3. Limit the intake of salt and sweets
4. Avoid alcohol or drink in moderation
5. Control the total number of calories consumed by you on a daily basis

6. Physical activity is a must

Foods mentioned in a food pyramid are always defined under different categories like meat, poultry and dairy products. This is meant to help you in making the right food choice. You have to remember that there is no single food that can replace everything else but vegetable definitely provide the maximum nutrients that is required by the human body.

One of the best ways to take care of your nutritional needs is through a well-planned vegetarian diet. If you change to a vegetarian diet then it will consist of mostly fresh vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, seeds and nuts. Since meat is not a part of a vegetarian diet hence, they will contain less of cholesterol and fat and will be high on fibers.

There are four main categories of vegetarians and they are:

- i. Flexitarians: These people are also known as semi-vegetarians and they follow a plant-based diet normally and sometimes consume smaller quantities of poultry, meat, and fish.
- ii. Vegans: Vegans are pure vegetarian who will consume only plant-based foods. They will not consume any animal-derived food like eggs, cheese, meat, milk, and fish.
- iii. Lacto-ovo vegetarians: This comprises of people who consume milk, eggs, and any milk products like yogurt and cheese apart from plant-based foods. Lacto-ovo vegetarians don't consume fish and red meat.
- iv. Lacto-vegetarians: Lacto-vegetarians consume only milk and milk based products apart from plant-based foods. They don't consume fish, eggs, meat, and other poultry products.

A healthy diet is generally restrictive in nature and most often than not it will require you to avoid meat, fish and poultry products, which are high in fat and low on nutrients. Hence, a healthy diet includes mostly fibrous food, which is in the form of fresh vegetables and fruits. Some of the important nutrients available through non-meat sources include:

- i. Protein: The human body requires a lot of protein for maintain healthy bones, skin, muscles and other organs. Some of the food products that are high in proteins include legumes, soy products, lentils, seeds, nuts, and whole grains.
- ii. Vitamin B-12: The human body requires vitamin B-12 for producing red blood cells and to prevent anemia. Vitamin B-12 is found in some of the enriched cereals, or fortified soy products.
- iii. Calcium: Calcium is required mostly for strengthening the bones and to make

the teeth stronger. You can find calcium in most of the green vegetables like turnip, spinach, collard greens, broccoli, and kale.

iv. Iron: Iron is a crucial nutrient that is required for red blood cells. You can consume iron by eating peas, dry beans, lentils, whole-grain products, fruits like bananas, dark leafy green vegetables, enriched cereals, and even dry fruit. You can also consume foods, which are rich in vitamin C like citrus fruits, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli and cabbage.

v. Zinc: This is an important nutrient that builds enzymes in the human body for enhancing the process of cell division and also helps in the formation of proteins. Some of the best food sources for zinc include soy products, whole grains, nuts and wheat germ.

If you consume these fibrous fruits then it will ensure a healthy life for you.