

## Your Vegetarian Baby

Most of us have to make a transition from a meat eating diet to a vegetarian one. And while the outcome is one you are happy about, that transition is sometimes difficult. And once you have made the conversion, its easy to regret the years you were a meat eater. So if you were able to maintain a good vegetarian diet throughout pregnancy, you are in the position to start your child off in life as a pure vegetarian with no previous exposure to meat at all. What a wonderful gift.

Now whether you decide to breast feed is very much an individual choice and may be driven by your ability physically. If you do go that route, you can continue the higher vitamin levels that your pregnancy in your diet. By keeping your diet pure and of a high vitamin content, you are continuing to pass that good quality vegetarian diet on to your baby each week he or she depends on you for breast milk.

Your vegetarian grocery or market will be a huge benefit to you in finding formulas and baby foods to turn to when the time to wean the baby comes along. Soy formulas are a great way to keep the protein and vitamin quality high in baby's first foods and still stay away from anything animal related. In addition to your vegetarian market, the internet is full of great information about how to supply your baby with great vegetarian formulas early in life. Combine that with the advice you can get from other vegetarian mothers who have gone down this path before you and you have great resources to draw on to give your baby just what she needs in these first months.

You may get some advice from those who are not in touch with the vegetarian lifestyle to put the child on cows milk as a next step from breast milk. But be sure you hold your ground because this transition is a critical one and your plans to raise your children in a pure vegetarian or vegan house depend on keeping to your plans and not going to cows milk in the little one's infancy.

Also do not allow too much iron in your babies diet. The higher iron in your system helped your infant be born with a surplus so you can ease off on that level of vitamin content during the first months of life. This is why soy formula is a good choice because the vitamin content is a good fit to what your baby needs. However do not give the baby soy milk but stick with customized baby products for the first year. Soy milk is not designed for newborns.

Around six months of age, you can start to give your baby vegetable based cereals. Rice cereal is a great choice as it is the right consistency for a little one to digest. Again, you can find good nutritious baby foods to use

for the first year in your vegetarian market or you can get good with your food processor and create your own baby foods for her from fresh produce. That is the best way because all of the nutrition is there right out of the food processor.

You already have a good feel for the best combinations of foods from your own vegetarian diet and the diet you have your children on if they too are vegetarians so you can adapt those recipes to fit what you prepare for baby. But don't neglect to continue your education by finding vegetarian based baby books about introducing all natural foods to your child as each month goes by.

By being careful, there is no reason you cannot take your baby from birth through toddlerhood using all natural, vegetarian recipes all the way. The little one will develop a natural love of vegetable flavors and he or she will be off and running on lifelong love of foods that are not from the meat food groups at all.

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