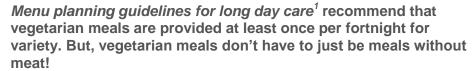
Healthy Eating Advisory Service

Four steps to a healthy vegetarian meal Early childhood services

Healthy vegetarian meals include a high protein food, a food with iron and a fruit or vegetable high in vitamin C.



Balanced vegetarian meals are suitable for all children (not just vegetarian children) and can promote food variety.

Follow these four steps to create healthy and balanced vegetarian meals that provide children with the protein and iron they need, that is otherwise provided by meat, poultry or fish.



Some examples of high protein vegetarian foods are:











Legumes i.e. dried or canned kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils, baked beans

Tofu

Eggs











Milk

Yoghurt

Cheese

Textured Vegetable Protein

Nuts



Legumes, tofu and eggs (above) are also sources of iron.

Other sources of iron are:







Broccoli

Peas

These are also high in vitamin C!

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¹ Menu planning guidelines for long day care, Healthy Eating Advisory Service, Department of Health and Human Services, State Government of Victoria, 2012, www.heas.health.vic.gov.au



3 Include a fruit or vegetable high in vitamin C

Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron from the meal.

Some examples of fruit and vegetables high in vitamin C include:











Capsicum

Broccoli

Cabbage

Cauliflower

beans











Frozen mixed vegetables

Potato

Spinach

Zucchini

Raw

tomato













Berries

Kiwifruit

Cantaloupe

Orange/ Mandarin

Sweet potato

Pineapple



Add colour to your plate by adding a variety of vegetables such as:











Carrot

Pumpkin

Lettuce

Celery

Canned tomatoes



Corn











Zucchini

Eggplant

Onions

Cucumber

Mushrooms

Healthy vegetarian meal ideas

To make a healthy vegetarian meal, use generous amounts of foods containing protein (1), iron (2) and vitamin C (3), and then add a variety of other vegetables (4).

Balance these meal ideas with suitable snacks to ensure that the daily menu offers enough food from each of the food groups each day (see Menu planning guidelines for long day care¹ for more information).

Here are some ideas for healthy, balanced and delicious vegetarian meals that kids will love:



Vegetarian meal ideas

Meal	Protein food	Iron food	Vitamin C food	Other vegetables
Pea and potato frittata with wholemeal pita bread*	Egg and cheese	Peas	Peas and potato	Lettuce and tomato
Vegetable stir fry with egg and tofu with noodles*	Egg and tofu	Broccoli and tofu	Broccoli, capsicum, cabbage	Corn, onion
Sweet potato and chickpea patties with Turkish bread*	Chickpeas	Chickpeas	Sweet potato	Lettuce, tomato, avocado
Vegetarian lentil bolognaise*	Lentils	Lentils	Zucchini	Canned tomato, celery, carrot
Stripy egg slice* with wholemeal bread	Egg	Egg	Zucchini	Onion, grated carrot
Egg and baked bean bread cups* with lettuce and tomato salad	Egg, baked beans	Eggs, baked beans	Tomato	Lettuce
Falafel balls with tzatziki*, Greek salad and Turkish bread	Chickpeas, egg	Chickpeas, egg	Raw tomato	Lettuce, cucumber
Vegetarian chilli con carne*	Chickpeas and red kidney beans	Chickpeas and red kidney beans	Capsicum	Onion, carrot, celery, tomato
Lentil dahl with rice and yoghurt	Lentils, yoghurt	Lentils, spinach	Sweet potato	Onion
Minestrone soup*	A mix of legumes	A mix of legumes	Green beans, zucchini	Carrot
Vegetable frittata	Egg	Egg	Mixed vegetables	Onion
Vegetarian fried rice*	Tofu and egg	Tofu and egg	Peas, capsicum	Corn, carrot, onion
Vegetarian lasagne*	Lentils, ricotta cheese	Lentils	Capsicum	Mushrooms
Vegetable hot pot with couscous*	Chickpeas	Chickpeas	Zucchini, cauliflower	Onion, carrot, canned tomato

^{*} Recipes available from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.



Important

Many vegetarian recipes offer less than one serve of meat alternative per child. If there are vegetarian recipes on your menu that do not provide each child with a full serve of meat alternative, you must include additional meat alternatives as a side dish or as a snack at another time during the day.

Try:

- hard boiled or scrambled eggs
- hummus* (with veggie sticks and crackers)
- falafel balls*
- baked beans on toast
- egg sandwiches
- four bean salad (as a side dish)
- egg salad (as a side dish)
- fruity bread pudding*
- egg and baked bean bread cups*
- * Recipes available from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

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