



# MY VEGAN CHILD

## A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS AND CARERS

This resource serves as a guide to educating a vegan child in your care. With more and more families becoming vegan, it is important that educators and carers gain an insight into the perspective of the vegan children they teach. Veganism is much more than just a diet. The information provided here will help you create a more inclusive learning environment for vegan children, as well as ideas and links for including humane education in your teaching program for all.



## WHAT IS VEGAN?

Veganism is: a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

There are many ways to embrace vegan living. Yet one thing all vegans have in common is a plant-based diet avoiding all animal foods such as meat (including seafood), dairy, eggs and honey, as well as products like leather and anything tested on animals.

## WHAT IS VEGETARIAN?

Vegetarians are similar to Vegans in that they do not eat meat. They also share many of the same ethical beliefs as vegans. Vegetarians may or may not include eggs, dairy and honey in their diets. A Pescetarian is someone who abstains from all animal flesh except fish.

A plant based diet is very similar to a vegan diet, but the person may not actively embrace a vegan lifestyle or hold the same ethical beliefs as a Vegan.

## A VEGAN CHILD'S DIET

Vegans choose **not** to eat:

- Meat (pigs, cows, lambs, chickens, fish, shellfish, any other animals)
- Dairy (cows milk, dairy ice cream, butter, cheese, milk powder, whey, rennet, milk products from any other animal)
- Eggs
- Honey
- Gelatin (Most lollies have gelatin in them.)

- Non-vegan stock powders, animal fats, animal-based flavourings in snack foods, etc.

Vegans **love** to eat:

- Fruit and Veges
- Beans, lentils, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Pasta, potatoes, grains, rice, wheat, polenta, couscous
- Plant based meat-alternative products (tvp, vege sausages, vege burgers, chicken style strips, etc)
- Soy products such as tofu and tempeh
- Plant based milks (soy, rice, oat, almond, coconut) vegan cheese
- Vegan nachos, pizza, burritos, shepherds pie, stir fries, curries, chips, burgers, pies.
- Baking and sweets using vegan ingredients

## BAKING AND FOOD IN SCHOOLS

- Vegan options and substitution are much appreciated so our children are included
- Consider using the vegan option as a standard ingredient/option for all, eg. using oil in school baking instead of butter
- Please don't make a big deal out of our child having a different option. If it comes up, use it as a starting point for positive conversations.
- If you would like us to bring in a vegan option or vegan ingredients, we are more than happy to do this, please just ask.
- Vegan options in school lunches and fundraiser events are much appreciated and we are happy to help with this, e.g. sausage sizzles, bake sales

Please do not offer our children non vegan food.

## WHY VEGAN?

### PROTECTING THE PLANET

Animal farming is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than the whole of global transportation<sup>1</sup>. Dairy and meat producers are polluting both the land and waterways<sup>2</sup>. Current commercial fishing operations could see fishless oceans by 2048<sup>3</sup>.

Up to ten times more land and water is needed to support a typical diet of meat, fish, eggs, and dairy than a plant-based diet<sup>4</sup>.

### HEALTH

Naturally rich in vitamins and minerals, high in fibre, and low in saturated fats, a well balanced vegan diet provides all the nutrition we need in all stages of life<sup>5</sup>. This includes adequate amounts of protein, iron, calcium and omega 3's. The only mineral that needs supplementing is B12, which can be easily sourced from vitamins or fortified foods. In addition, people on a vegan diet are at a reduced risk of the number one health disorders, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer and obesity<sup>5</sup>.

### COMPASSION FOR ANIMALS

In all animal agriculture industries, innocent, sentient animals are bred to be killed. Most dairy cows are separated from their young shortly after they give birth, so that humans can take their milk. Male calves are either killed immediately or raised for veal or beef. The egg industry kills all baby male chicks as they do not produce eggs. Even animals raised free range and organic end up in the same slaughterhouses. Vegans choose not to participate in this.

Veganism is the fastest growing social justice movement of our time. As well as teaching our children compassion for animals, we also teach them to be patient and non-judgemental about their peer's food choices and culture, just as we hope to be respected too.



## INCLUSIVE TEACHING OF VEGAN CHILDREN

Living Vegan means practicing an ethical belief of veganism. In New Zealand, ethical beliefs are protected by the Human Rights Act 1993, and most other countries too. Please respect our child's veganism as if it were a different culture or set of values. As already discussed, it is more than a diet, it is a way of living that values all animals as beings that deserve to live free from harm. The following suggestions may help you provide an inclusive environment for vegan children.

## SCIENCE AND INQUIRY

- Help our child and their peers look into how animal agriculture is affecting the environment
- Dissection – our child will not participate in any dissection of animals. There is technology available to us today that makes corpse dissection obsolete. More info in Appendix 1
- Nutrition/diet – Please support our child in exploring what a well balanced vegan diet consists of (e.g fruits and vegetables, grains, plant proteins, carbohydrates).

## LITERACY

- Reading. Please be mindful of the reading material our vegan child is made to read. Our children have compassion for all animals and may find it upsetting reading about fishing, hunting or animals being killed for food. When the child does read these books, they may want to explore how this might conflict with their values and knowledge, e.g. what really happens to animals on farms, how it makes them feel, etc
- Older students may want to incorporate their passion for animal rights when learning to communicate in today's democratic environment, such as letter-writing, petitioning, creating awareness material using print and video media, and fundraising.

## SCHOOL OUTINGS

- Vegans do not choose to support animal exploitation in any form and so generally avoid visiting zoos or aquariums, or taking part

in events using animals as entertainment (rodeo etc). A great alternative is observing animals and wildlife in their natural habitats, or visiting and supporting animal sanctuaries that provide safe and loving homes for rescued animals.

- We acknowledge that any outdoors outing can be a positive experience though, such as farm visits. So if our children are attending on such a visit, we ask that teachers be mindful of our child's beliefs and empathy - e.g. not harming or exploiting animals in front of them (possum or rabbit killing, milking) or showing them dead carcasses, nor normalising/justifying any animal harm.

## PEST CONTROL & CONSERVATION

- Different vegan viewpoints on this range from 'doing the least harm' to 'doing no harm'. The 'Compassionate Conservation'<sup>6</sup> approach is most in line with vegan values (e.g. using infertility bait/darts or trap and release). In school situations, please be aware that the killing of pests will offend and sadden vegan children, e.g. school possum/rabbit hunts or mice trap experiments.

## GENERAL

- Our child may want to start or join an Animal Rights group within the school.
- We appreciate positive conversations within the classroom on veganism. If our child is open to it, they could lead a Q&A session with their class.

## ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO ASK!

Thank you for your time in reading this resource. We hope you find it informative and helpful in assisting you to provide a caring and inclusive education for our vegan child. The Appendixes provide further information on classroom resources, cooking and veganism in general.



# MY VEGAN CHILD

## APPENDIXES

Classroom resources, vegan cooking, nutrition and further information on veganism





## APPENDIX 1 - CLASSROOM RESOURCES:

- SAFE Animal Squad: <http://www.safeanimalsquad.org.nz/>
- SAFE's educational website, which has the goal of teaching compassion and kindness for animals. Kids can join the 'Safe Youth' club.
- Animal Bites - a SAFE newsletter sent out to all NZ primary schools.
- Animals & Us – NZ Classroom resources for secondary schools (could be adapted to primary) <http://safe.org.nz/animals-us>
- The Vegetarian Resource Group <http://www.vrg.org/>
- Veganism lesson plans: <https://www.vrg.org/nutshell/>
- My Vegan Plate Colouring: <https://www.vrg.org/nutshell/MyVeganPlateCP.pdf>
- Humane Education Australia <http://www.thinkkind.org/>
- Resources for teaching critical thinking, ethics and empathy for animals.
- What's in a glass of milk? Lesson plan and fact sheets: <http://www.thinkkind.org/whats-in-a-glass-of-milk-lesson-plan/>
- Be Kind to Animals resources: <http://www.thinkkind.org/kind-animals-week-poster/>
- How to write a persuasive letter: <http://www.thinkkind.org/persuasive-writing-worksheet/>
- A collection of heart-warming stories about animals: <http://www.thinkkind.org/category/stories/>
- Jane Goodall's Roots to Shoots program for kids: <https://rootsandshoots.org.au/>
- SPCA Teachers Portal: <https://teachers.spcaeducation.org.nz/>
- Institute for Humane Education: <http://humaneeducation.org/resource-center/>
- NZ Veg Society <http://www.vegetarian.org.nz/active4animals/>



## VIDEOS

- Bite Sized Vegan – Youtube videos for kids on Veganism
- TedTalk – Genesis Butler
- Okja, Cowspiracy and What The Health (Netflix - for older students)

## BOOKS: HUMANE EDUCATION AND VEGAN THEMES

- Animal Rescue by by Patrick George
- Do Animals Have Feelings Too? By David L. Rice
- Charlotte’s Web by E.B White
- That’s Why We Don’t Eat Animals by Ruby Roth
- Herb the Vegetarian Dragon by Jules Bass
- The Vegetarian Tiger by Kerry Clark
- V is for Vegan: The ABC’s of Being Kind by Ruby Roth
- The Six-Foot Rats by Rebecca Gibbs (NZ)
- Not a Nugget by Stephanie Dreyer
- The Boy Who Loved Broccoli by Sarah A. Creighton
- The Magic Finger by Roald Dahl
- The Swan Series by Anita Ahmadizadeh

## ADDITIONAL BOOKS WITH VEGAN OR ANIMAL LOVING THEMES:

<https://www.petakids.com/spotlight/animal-friendly-kids-books/>

## DISSECTION

- <https://headlines.peta.org/teachkind-dissection-feature/>
- <https://www.neavs.org/alternatives/in-education>
- <https://www.navs.org/the-issues/animals-used-in-classroom-dissection/>

## AGRICULTURE EFFECT ON GREENHOUSE GASES:

- (<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6294>).

# APPENDIX 2 - VEGAN COOKING AND NUTRITION

## VEGAN COOKING SUBSTITUTES

### EGG

- Flax egg (1 Tbsp ground flaxseeds in a few Tbsp water, sit for 5min )
- Chia egg (1 Tbsp chia seeds in a few Tbsp water, sit for 5min )
- ½ mashed banana, ¼ cup apple sauce or ¼ cup mashed soft tofu
- Commercial egg replacers made from tapioca starch etc
- Tofu can be scrambled

### MILK

- Soy, oat, rice, almond, coconut milk
- Water, coconut water

### BUTTER

- Olive oil or vegetable oil
- Margarine (low processed such as Olivo)
- Vegan butter such as Nuttelex
- Coconut oil (also great on toast and on popcorn!)
- Tahini (high in calcium)

### HONEY

Maple syrup, agave syrup, rice syrup, golden syrup, sugar, date puree (dates blended with boiling water)

### CHOCOLATE

- Whittakers (dark chocolate), Trade Aid, Pams and Sweet William all do vegan chocolate and chocolate chip products (be careful to avoid palm oil, which can come from unethical sources)
- Homemade chocolate using coconut oil, cocoa powder and maple syrup

## MEAT

- Tofu and Tempeh (soy products)
- TVP (textured Soy Protein - like mince)
- Mushrooms, eggplant, cauliflower, jackfruit (meaty texture)
- Beans, chickpeas and lentils
- Plant based meat alternatives from supermarket such as Quorn, Sunfed Chicken Free Chicken, Beefless Chunks, Vege Sausages, Vege Burger patties

## VEGAN TREATS

- Biscuits & cakes: Oreos, Farmbake peanut brownies, bliss balls, homemade vegan treats
- Lollies: Smarties, many 'dark' chocolates, most plain lollipops, plain flavoured chuppa chups (not the 'cream flavoured ones'). Many lollies include gelatin, so just check the ingredients before offering.
- Chips – Ready Salted flavours, Cassava originals, popcorn with coconut oil
- Ice cream – soy or coconut based ice cream, lemonade or fruit flavoured popsicles, sorbet, ice cream made with frozen bananas or home made ice blocks (cheap and easy!)

## VEGAN NUTRITION

A well balanced vegan diet, consisting of a wide range of plant wholefoods, can meet all the nutritional needs for vegan children, as confirmed by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (The world's largest body of food and nutrition professionals):

"It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that appropriately planned vegetarian, including vegan, diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. These diets are appropriate for all

stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood, and for athletes”<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the World Health Organisation classes processed meats such as bacon, ham and sausages as a type 1 carcinogen, and other red meat as “probably carcinogenic”, products that a vegan child’s diet will most definitely not include.<sup>7</sup>

## BUT WHAT ABOUT....

### PROTEIN ?

Vegans get protein from plant protein. Since 10-20% of calories in most plant foods are from protein, and humans need only 10-15% of their calories from protein, requirements are easily met with a well balanced diet. The biggest and strongest animals in the world - gorillas and elephants - are herbivores too! Some of the highest sources of plant proteins are: pumpkin seeds, peanut butter, oats, chia seeds, almonds, tofu, soy and legumes.

### CALCIUM ?

Calcium is naturally widespread in the plant kingdom, and so our calcium needs can be met with whole plant foods (and, optionally, calcium fortified foods and drinks). Some of the richest plant sources of calcium are: leafy greens, nuts, sesame seeds, beans, and fortified plant milks, soy products and cereals.

### IRON ?

There are plenty of plant foods containing this mineral, and studies have proven that hemoglobin values are similar to those found in non-vegans. Good plant sources of iron include lentils, chickpeas, beans, tofu, cashew nuts, chia seeds, flaxseed, pumpkin seeds, kale, dried apricots, raisins, quinoa and fortified breakfast cereal. Vitamin C increases iron absorption. Good sources of vitamin C include broccoli,

kiwifruit, oranges, strawberries and pineapple.

## VITAMIN B12 ?

B12 is manufactured by certain types of bacteria found in nature. Because plants vary widely in their levels of bacteria (especially washed vegetables) we cannot rely on plant foods to meet our B12 needs. Vegans get their B12 by consuming supplements and B12 fortified foods (such as plant milks and soy products). Non Vegans are also at risk of low B12 levels too. Many animal products only have B12 in them because the animal's feed or the end product is supplemented.

## OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS?

Omega-3's, important for infant and child development, are present in several plant foods, including flaxseeds (whole, ground or oil), hemp products, canola oil, walnuts, tofu and leafy green vegetables. For more information, visit [nutritionfacts.org](http://nutritionfacts.org)

## RECIPE BOOKS

- The Help Yourself Cookbook for Kids by Ruby Roth
- Revive Cafe Cookbook by Jeremy Dixon (NZ)
- Vegan Lunch Box by Jennifer McCann
- Plant Powered Families by Dreena Burton
- Minimilast Baker by Dana Shultz
- But My Family Would Never Eat Vegan by Kristy Turner
- The Plantiful Table by Andrea Duclos
- My Darling Lemon Thyme by Emma Galloway (NZ)
- Clara's Cookbook (NZ, Vegetarian, Child Author)
- Easy Vegan by Sue Quinn
- How to Eat a Rainbow by Ellie Bedford

# APPENDIX 3 - FURTHER VEGAN INFORMATION (FOR ADULTS):

## WEBSITES

- Nutritionfacts.org
- Challenge22.com
- Carnismdebunked.com
- Livekindly.co/vegan-faqs/

## DOCUMENTARIES

### ENVIRONMENTAL:

- Cowspiracy (Netflix) <https://www.netflix.com/nz/title/80033772>

### HEALTH:

- What The Health (Netflix) <https://www.netflix.com/nz/title/80174177>
- Forks Over Knives (Netflix) <https://www.netflix.com/nz/title/70185045>
- Game Changers (Vegan Athletes) <http://gamechangersmovie.com/>

### ANIMALS:

- Earthlings\* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4r2GXdi7lg>
- Dominion\* <http://www.dominionmovement.com/>

\*Warning - Graphic. Not suitable for children.

## BOOKS

- How Not to Die by Dr Greger <https://nutritionfacts.org/book/>
- Food Choice and Sustainability by Dr Oppenlander <https://www.amazon.com/Food-Choice-Sustainability-Buying-Eating/dp/1626524351>

- Dominion by Matthew Scully <https://www.amazon.com/Dominion-Power-Suffering-Animals-Mercy/dp/0312319738>
- Becoming Vegan by Brenda Davis <https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Vegan-Complete-Adopting-Plant-Based/dp/1570671036>

## SPEECHES

- James Aspey, Animal Rights Activist - This Speech is Your Wake Up Call (YouTube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a22XxXP3nU8>
- Earthling Ed speech (YouTube) - You Will Never Look at Your Life in the Same Way Again <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3u7hXpOm58>
- Melanie Joy, Psychologist - The Secret Reason We Eat Meat (YouTube) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvm7xymgk\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvm7xymgk_k)

## AND JUST FOR FUN - FAMOUS VEGANS!

- Miley Cyrus
- Patrik Baboumian (World's Strongest Man)
- Joaquin Phoenix
- Natalie Portman
- Woody Harrelson
- Moby
- Will.I.am
- Ariana Grande
- Peter Dinklage
- James Cameron
- Al Gore
- Liam Hemsworth

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