

[Meatless Motherhood](#)

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HEALING

Meatless Motherhood

Vegetarian pregnancy is ideal for mom and baby

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There is absolutely no requirement for humans, including pregnant humans, to ingest animal foods. We get along very well--better, in fact--without the added problems and stresses that occur when animal products are consumed.

You may ask, "Why do so many doctors recommend meat eating?" The reason is that they have never studied nutrition, either in medical school or since graduation. There is simple scientific evidence available to those who are curious enough to look for it, and some of the newer physicians are beginning to learn of these facts. But unless the expectant vegetarian mother is lucky enough to have a knowledgeable doctor, she will need to personally study and understand her own nutritional needs.

It is said that the pregnant woman must eat enough for two. The truth of the matter is that the women must eat food for 1 1/4, since the fetus does not demand as many calories as a

grown person. The World Health Organization's recommended daily allowance (RDA) for protein is 44 grams; the US Government's is 74 grams. The truth is somewhere between these two extremes, but the US RDA is probably safer. It is especially wise in the last trimester to maintain this higher level. With adequate calorie intake, it is very difficult NOT to receive sufficient protein, providing some slight care is used in choosing the food sources.

A good balance of whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds will assure this balanced protein diet. More variety in this regard is best for the body, as it provides a greater amount of amino acids from which to choose the "building blocks" for your child. We tend to forget that the green foods--especially dark green foods, such as broccoli, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi, spinach, beet mustard greens and Swiss chard--are all good sources of protein, and also of calcium.

We also know that sprouts have a greater amount of protein than the basic seed or nut. However, you should not have more than about two ounces a day in sprout form, as there are alkaloids in these that may adversely affect the baby or mother. We should be careful of the amount of the fattier seeds eaten, for we still want the diet to be no more than 25-30% fat calories.

Our critics will also say that it is essential to drink milk and consume a lot of milk products for calcium. The fact is that it's not necessary to drink milk to get calcium. And the calcium source from standard milk products may be contaminated, and the amount of fat is markedly concentrated, especially in

cheese. The US RDA for calcium is 200 milligrams per day. A good, balanced vegetarian diet with the use of dark green leafy vegetables will probably give this. But to be sure, it is advisable to supplement the diet with 500?800 milligrams of calcium ascorbate (calcium plus vitamin C).

This should also be associated with 200?300 mg. of magnesium, easily obtained from vitamins or food supplements. Do not take the supplements that are made from dolomite, bone meal, oyster shells or other animal sources. These may be contaminated with zinc, lead or mercury. For a detailed guide to maintaining a vegetarian diet during pregnancy, I suggest you obtain Sharon Yntema's Vegetarian Pregnancy (224 pages, McBooks Press, ^{US}\$10.95).

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