

Exploring the Rising Popularity and Motivations behind Veganism: A Plant - Based Path to Personal and Societal Benefits

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Abstract: *A vegan diet is built on plant - based foods such as fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, legumes, and meals made from plants. A vegan diet sometimes called a plant - based diet, is quickly increasing acceptance (Petre, 2021). For some individuals, abstaining from dairy, meat, and any other products produced by animals may seem like a significant sacrifice. Others, however, believe that switching to a vegan diet is simple, given the many personal and societal benefits that come with it (Sengul, 2022). For instance, many people are deeply concerned with the welfare of animals. Many individuals find that the prospect of better health is sufficient motivation.*

Keywords: children, adolescents, vegan diet, maternal and fetal outcome, food and nutrition

1. Introduction

A rigorous vegetarian who abstains from all animal products—including meat, dairy, eggs, honey, and everything else is referred to as a vegan. A variety of delectable and nutrient - dense foods, including fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and legumes, may (and should) be included in a vegan diet (BROS VEGAN, 2016). A vegan diet may also include seeds. Animal goods, such as silk, wool, leather, and fur, are not used by vegans. People often decide not to purchase products tested on animals, including animal parts or components, or those that use animal parts as filters (like certain wines, beers, and white sweets) (Fryer, 2019). This covers products that use animal parts as filters.

Vegan impact on pregnant ladies

When a woman is pregnant, her ability to eat a well - rounded and nutritious diet is crucial to maintaining an environment favourable for good fetal development and growth (Avnon et al., 2021) —both the mother and her offspring gain from this. In line with the theory of "early life programming, " environmental elements and way of life decisions made While pregnant decide a person's likelihood risk of subsequently acquiring chronic illnesses, as well as impact a child's overall health. These variables influence the likelihood of later - life regular illness development. During pregnancy, consuming more macro - and micronutrients and maintaining a healthy diet is essential (Alnasser & Alomran, 2023). This creates a significant window of time for

establishing dietary routines that are beneficial for the baby's healthy growth.

According to the most recent Dietary Guidelines for the American Diet and the Mediterranean Diet, inadequate amounts of crucial minerals and micronutrients (proteins, iron, folic acid, vitamin D, calcium, iodine, omega - 3, and vitamin B12) should be avoided throughout pregnancies and during pregnancy (Boutros et al., 2020). These inadequacies might put the kids at risk for developing long - term diseases, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and delays in neurodevelopment.

High standards of cleanliness, the avoidance of potentially dangerous substances, the provision of adequate amounts of energy and macronutrients, and the satisfaction of the requirements (which are frequently augmented) for vitamins and minerals should all be taken into account when planning a diet for a pregnant woman (Benham et al., 2022). Therefore, while pregnant, it is crucial to maintain a diet that is both nourishing and well - balanced. The way that people see food and eating has evolved significantly over the last few decades, even though there is no such thing as the "perfect diet, " which is always beneficial and does not impose any limits (Brytek - Matera, 2020). In actuality, it is now understood that food is both a basic need for maintaining the body's essential functions and a crucial tool for promoting the advancement of a healthy lifestyle.



According to the American Dietetic Association and the Canadian Dietary Association, vegetarianism may be pursued throughout one's life, including when pregnant (Clarke, 2018). Despite being linked to various potential nutritional risks for the mother, it has significant health implications for both the mother and the children. There is now a rising trend toward healthier lives, which includes selecting better foods and a rise in environmental awareness and sustainable lifestyles. An increasing number of individuals worldwide are calling for a decrease in the use of meat and products made from it and an increase in the usage of organic products (Domke, 2018). These decisions are often linked to healthier lifestyles. They may thus be associated with many health benefits during pregnancy, not only for the mothers but also for the unborn children.

Vegan Impact on mother's health

A vegetarian diet may have various possible effects on pregnant women, although generally speaking, there is little data to back up these statements. It is believed that doing so may assist in decreasing blood pressure and, consequently, minimize the chance of developing pregnancy-related hypertension illnesses such as preeclampsia and eclampsia (Franziska, 2021). Additionally, it was shown that the prevalence of proteinuric hypertension was significantly decreased. These findings support the hypothesis that preeclampsia is associated with increased sugar and saturated fat consumption and decreased fibre intake. Similarly, it was proposed that pregnant women's blood pressure would fall if they consumed three plates of vegetables daily. It has been shown that a mother's weight during pregnancy is linked to a higher risk for her unborn children to have chronic illnesses. Vegetarians' diets, which are high in fruits and vegetables, may make it simpler to

keep this variable under control (Fryer, 2019). According to recent studies, vegetarian diets may be associated with better weight control in pregnant women, resulting in less or comparable weight gain to omnivorous diets. The subjects of this study were vegetarians.

Effects on Children and Adolescents

Vegetarian diets are often associated with a lower risk of exposure to dangerous chemicals. Increased intakes of antioxidants and other bioactive substances, which can provide further protection against the impacts of environmental variables, are another characteristic of it (Gingerella, 2019). As a result, not only during the development of the pregnancy but also during that of the neonates and later in life, the feeding pattern may substantially impact the offspring. It is well known that nitrate, nitrite, and N-nitroso compound exposure may increase the likelihood of a kid having a brain tumour or a neural tube anomaly. The most significant dietary sources of these compounds are cured beef and smoked fish, the two foods that vegetarian diet patterns do not include. However, these compounds may also be present in high concentrations in pickled vegetables (Gallagher et al., 2022). On average, children born to vegetarian mothers are less likely than meat-eating mothers to have conditions connected to nitrate, nitrite, and N-nitroso compounds.

Additionally, it is commonly known that teenagers have a strong preference for VD. The effects of VD in this more vulnerable age group are exciting since children and teens must maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet to fulfil the growing demands imposed on their bodies during the growth spurt (Alnasser & Alomran, 2023). In a recent study, anthropometry, dietary intakes, and nutritional status of

children and adolescents aged 6 to 18 years and a mean age of 12.7 3.9 years were examined using a cross - sectional methodology. This group contained 137 omnivores, 115 vegans, and 149 vegetarians. Compared to omnivores, vegetarians and vegans, they have consumed considerably more carbohydrates ($p = 0.0002$) (Brytek - Matera, 2020). There was no significant difference in the blood concentrations of vitamin B2, D3, HDL - C, or triglycerides among the other diet groups, even though vegetarians consumed the minor protein ($p = 0.02$) of any diet group.

International dietary recommendations for vegetarians and vegans

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, if proper and healthy standards are met, a well - planned plant - based eating pattern may benefit all life phases. For instance, if most people follow a vegetarian diet, a vegetarian diet that includes a range of plant - based foods will have a protein quality comparable to a diet that includes meat (Jakše, 2021). These guidelines state that an adult woman should aim to consume 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day when she consumes meals that include high - quality protein sources, such as eggs, meat, milk, or fish. Due to the decrease in protein digestibility that occurs when dairy products, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds are the significant sources of

protein in the diet, the need for dietary protein for vegetarian adult women should be increased by 20% until it reaches 1 g/kg/day. The ability of a meal to be broken down into its component amino acids is gauged by the Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS) (Katonova, 2022). This rating assesses the amount of protein in a particular diet. Values close to one indicate that the dietary source included all nine essential amino acids and came from an animal, whereas values below 0.7 imply that the original was a plant. Even if the score is lower, additional meals with vegetables and various amino acid compositions may raise the overall calibre of the diet's protein intake.

Messina's guide for vegetarians in North America states that this population needs to eat more legumes, nuts, tofu, beans, seeds, fortified breakfast cereals, milk, cheese or yoghurt, and fortified soymilk, all of which are excellent sources of vitamin B12, vitamin D, iron, and calcium (1200 to 1500 mg/day of calcium is advised, 20% more than omnivores) (Kale et al., 2022). Additionally, this group needs to drink more fortified soymilk. Since the average levels of these minerals in vegan diets are insufficient, vegan dieters must regularly take calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12 supplements.



2. Conclusion

Vegan diets that need to be properly planned may lead to deficiencies in several crucial nutrients, even if diets made solely of plant foods tend to have greater concentrations of several nutrients. According to some data, switching to a vegan diet may aid in weight reduction without the need for conscious calorie control. To fully grasp the potential health benefits of a vegan diet, further study is required. In this research, we focus on the impacts of veganism on vulnerable populations, including children, adolescents, pregnant women, and nursing mothers, and the effects of strict vegan mothers' diets on fetal development. To lower the danger of any negative impact on their health that may be permanent,

vegans should be thoroughly assessed for symptoms of nutritional inadequacy and provided with proper medical treatment. Doctors, politicians, and the general public must now more than ever understand the risks and benefits of diets that do not involve ingesting animal protein. This is due to the general public's growing interest in diets that exclude the consumption of animal protein.

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