

2020 Nutrition Challenge: April VEGAN Month

Rose Patient, RN, Health Coach



For those reading this who are curious, but have not experienced a VEGAN meal plan, I can tell you first-hand that the food is tasty. It will open your eyes and palate to amazing flavors! BUT the downside of this choice is that it can land you into deficiencies, leading to fatigue and weakness if you ignore your nutritional needs.



INSPIRING HEARTS

The depth and breadth of the VEGAN breathtaking. Their reach cannot be underestimated as one of my 12 Diets in 12 Months. They animals, and vote for everything with their forks. food and consumer goods that are cruelty free, sustainably raised. Due to the low cholesterol, low-are often recommended as part of a treatment plan disease. It has been proven to help reverse diabetes.



impact on our society is and deserves to be selected champion the rights of This drives demand for organic, non-GMO and fat nature, VEGAN diets for those with severe heart Amazing.

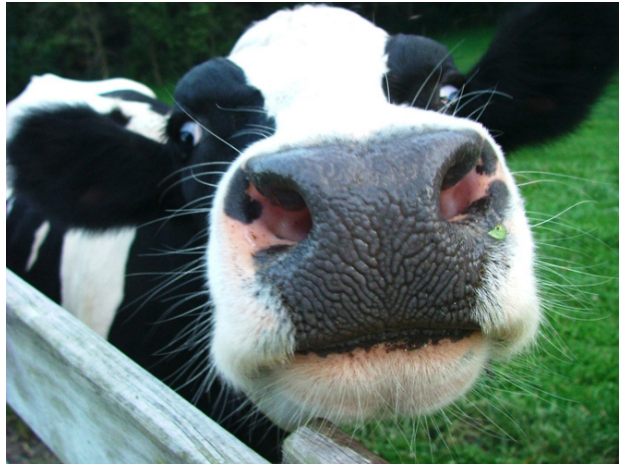
I have dabbled with vegetarian and VEGAN foods for 3 decades now, and it has a special place in my heart. John Robbins, a pioneer in this field, wrote a book, *May All Be Fed*, which educated me on our food supply-chain. It changed how I looked at food and how I consumed it. My palate and my heart are grateful.

But there are very REAL concerns about nutrition. So much so, that the Belgian government has taken a stance that the VEGAN diet is not appropriate for children, teens, pregnant and nursing women. I actually agree. Here's the link:

<https://www.sciencetimes.com/articles/21989/20190521/belgian-doctors-say-vegan-diet-is-not-healthy-for-kids.htm>

The claim that you can easily meet these needs by eating “plenty of variety” is misleading. Every VEGAN organization insists that you can achieve superior nutrition on this diet. I like to let the data speak for itself, so I tracked my every morsel this month on www.cronometer.com, and I fell short of: Calcium, B12, Iodine, Zinc, Omega 3s, and Essential Amino Acids, I ate at home, organic veggies, greens daily, used onion, broccoli, beans and grains, and it wasn't enough. IF I had a personal chef who had a lot of experience making and preparing nutritious vegan meals, then MAYBE I would agree. But I don't. **I love the VEGAN ideal, but if you want to preserve your health, you need to be honest with yourself.**

Track your intake. Get the data. Then order supplements.



A word about the VEGAN ideal:

This is a lot more about food. Most VEGANs embrace the organic lifestyle as well, that protects our earth. Veganism ranges from animal rights, factory farms and water use, to reducing your carbon footprint and protecting the ozone. It brings coherence between beliefs and action.

It is sad to know that other who disagree feel that they have the right to vehemently argue and mock something they don't understand. Often, these attacks are short on knowledge and long on criticism. Even though I am not a vegetarian, I hope that true dialogue can eventually be possible. Maybe then we can work together instead of tear each other down. If you would like to join this discussion, please join my [Facebook Group: Vegan Diet Discussion Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/222633649068662/)

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Here are just some of the topics we plan to explore:

- Soy Substitutes
- Animal rights
- Factory farming
- Land use
- Composting
- Water use
- Healthy fats
- Non-GMO
- Vegan kids
- Ozone
- Carbon Footprint
- Honey
- Backyard chickens & eggs
- Gardening
- Sustainable Farming
- Supplement Needs
- Animals products used in food production like bone char and gelatin

The COVID-19 'Stay Home, Stay Safe' Mandate → 5K Run Cancelled

Not only have we been told to work from home, we are also discouraged from gathering with other people. And a road race is definitely a large outdoor gathering with lots of people in close proximity!! Not to be deterred, I was planning a 5K at Kensington Metro Park. Unfortunately, that outlet is being restricted as well, so I will have to skip this month. Sigh.



Benefits & Lifestyle Impact

- The VEGAN diet is a superior choice for those watching their cholesterol. Cholesterol only comes from animal products. Did you know? Your body can make its own cholesterol for use in cell walls and hormones!
- Your digestive system may need time to adjust to the sheer volume of fiber. My average was 31 grams per day, and yes that makes you very regular.
- Specialty grocery stores needed !! Items like Ezekiel bread, nutritional yeast and tempeh may not be carried by your local grocer.
- Net food cost is unchanged. Even though the price for organic foods is higher, you are not purchasing meats and cheeses which are more expensive than most grain and vegetables.
- Cruelty-free consumer products like detergents and shampoos are often more expensive.
- Restaurants are poorly prepared for VEGANs. Most of their options are simply a garden salad or a veggie burger substitute. On busy days, I love to eat out, and found the poor meal choices frustrating.

My Health Status & Depression

A note on wellness. It's not all about how you feel physically. Your mental and emotional health is also important. I did the VEGAN diet "justice", creating variety in my meals and relied mostly on whole foods, but I did struggle with some sadness. (Note, I took supplements to meet all my RDAs).



I'm usually upbeat and strive to keep my thoughts greater than my emotions. I know that you can think yourself up as easily as you can think yourself into a pit. I work at this, and so I feel that I can honestly share that I felt a greater struggle in this regard on the VEGAN diet.

My husband and my daughter both noted that I was different. Midway through the month, I allowed a cheat day and had some meat and cheese. Not much, but it was enough to bring me back to my normal self within 24 hours. That was eye-opening.

There are not many studies of the VEGAN diet and depression, but some do point to a correlation. YouTube is filled with VEGANs defending their diet, and so, I felt that there is not a community out there recognizing this as a common concern.

Even though I meditated and stayed to a regular exercise routine, I struggled. I will leave it there. That was my experience.

3 Discoveries

- ⇒ Turbinado Sugar is a terrific
- ⇒ Avocado toast is easy
- ⇒ Fake meats and imitation dairy do NOT cut the mustard



The Good, The Bad and other Insights for VEGAN wanna-bes

1) Share the burden:

The VEGAN diet requires frequent grocery trips for fresh vegetables, and a LOT of chopping. If you LOVE to cook and spend time in the kitchen then this may not be a problem. However, for me, it turned a relaxed and joyful time for me into more of a chore. Having a partner to share these tasks will improve your success. It's not realistic to think you can just choose a vegan diet and not change how you spend your time.

2) Transition: Give yourself time to adjust to this way of life.

Get good at one thing at a time. For the first week focus on greens, then the next week focus on grains, then the next week work with tofu, etc. This will provide much needed structure in navigating this new way to eat.

3) Sugar: These destructive empty calories displace nutrients. Keep it minimal.

4) Food Bullies: We cannot control the thoughts, behaviors and choices of others.

But we can control how we respond. It is enough to say:

“This is how I have chosen to live.” Or “What can I help you understand?”

5) You need supplements.

My commitment to homemade meals and nutrient density was significant, and according to my www.Cronometer.com analysis, I still fell dramatically short of vitamins. See my updated blog on this topic:

<https://www.patienttherapies.com/post/should-a-vegetarian-take-vitamin-supplements>

6) Mixed messaging: If you are giving up certain foods for animal welfare, then create foods that are great by themselves, instead of fake meats.



I Miss Salmon Still

Last month, (on a vegetarian diet: no meat, no fish) my dietary intake of the essential Omega 3s (EPA & DHA) was critically low. These are abundant in salmon and other fish. It is nearly impossible on the VEGAN diet to find enough Omega 3s to support your brain and hormonal systems. During this month, I supplemented with a VEGAN source of Omega 3s.

Quality is important for supplements, and worth the cost. Many drug store brands use a cheaper formulation of vitamins, which means your body won't be able to absorb it well. You can order high quality, bio-available, competitively priced non-GMO vegetarian supplements through my website:

<https://www.patienttherapies.com/shop-supplements>

Nutritional Balance

It's a good bet to work with a nutrition expert who can guide you, and I also recommend finding a doctor who respects your choices and monitors your blood work. Being proactive is essential to good health. Here are the 7 nutrients that VEGANs are at high risk for not getting. My nutrient analysis showed that 6 of these 7 were areas of concern for me. **ALSO – I did not get enough PROTEIN, and I only got 61% of the 9 essential amino acids! This was a surprise because my diet was high in variety – but apparently not enough.**

Nutrients of Concern

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Calcium | Bone-Up by Jarrow Formulas |
| 2. Zinc | (in Bone-up formula) |
| 3. B-12 | Vitamin Code RAW B-Complex by Garden of Life |
| 4. Omega 3s: DHA & EPA | Omega 3 Vegan by Cytoplan |
| 5. Vitamin D | Vegan Vitamin D3 by Cytoplan |
| 6. Iodine | Potassium Iodide by Pure Encapsulations |
| 7. Iron | (monitor and take under direction of physician) |

TWO BRUTAL HONESTY MOMENTS:

- 1) I did not enjoy the soy yogurt with my granola.
I did not enjoy the fake shredded cheese.
I did not enjoy the vegan sour cream.
I did not like almond-milk creamer in my coffee.
I did not like them Sam-I-Am!

- 2) Beans are needed almost as much as greens. You cannot meet your protein requirements without beans. They are also the best plant-based source of essential amino acids. I could not successfully incorporate beans into my meals without being gassy. Socially, this can and does create anxiety.
Enough said.



BEST MOMENTS

- 1) Surprising my family with delicious meals. *See next page!*
- 2) Realizing that my supplements were indeed filling the gaps.
- 3) Watching my blood pressure drop

BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Giving up Dairy

I love-love-love cheese & yogurt.



10 Favorite Recipes



- 1) Curry Lentil Soup (recipe on FB 4/20 post)
- 2) Hummus
- 3) Stuffed Portobello Mushroom
- 4) Zucchini Banana Chocolate Chip Walnut Muffins
- 5) Tempeh Wrap on Cauliflower Tortilla (4/13 FB post)
- 6) Avocado Toast (4/5 FB post)
- 7) Buckwheat Waffles (recipe 4/09 FB post)
- 8) Ezekiel Bread Tofurky Sandwich (4/4 FB post)
- 9) Hot Bean, Sweet Bean Stir fry
- 10) Cream of Broccoli Soup (recipe on 4/11 FB post)

References to FB posts can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/PatientTherapiesllc/posts>

Kitchen Hacks & Key Foods

- Take 10 minutes to bag snacks for the week (grapes, carrots, nuts)
- Avoid Analogues (vegan burgers, hot dogs, and cheese)
- Egg white substitute for baking: use liquid from a chickpea can!! 2 Tbsp per egg white. Whip the chickpea liquid in a mixer and it will give you beautiful whipped whites. Trust me. It's great! Used it in baking my buckwheat waffles.
- **Key Foods: Turbinado Sugar, Avocado, Greens, Lentils, Potatoes, Granola, Raisins, Grains, Olive Oil, Sea Salt**

Next Month: Diet Challenge Reveal!

May 2020 is Probiotic-Rich Month!