

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines

Appendix 5. USDA Food Patterns: Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern

The Healthy Vegetarian Pattern is adapted from the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, modifying amounts recommended from some food groups to more closely reflect eating patterns reported by self-identified vegetarians in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). This analysis allowed development of a Pattern that is based on evidence of the foods and amounts consumed by vegetarians, in addition to meeting the same nutrient and Dietary Guidelines standards as the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern. Based on a comparison of the food choices of these vegetarians to nonvegetarians in NHANES, amounts of soy products (particularly tofu and other processed soy products), legumes, nuts and seeds, and whole grains were increased, and meat, poultry, and seafood were eliminated. Dairy and eggs were included because they were consumed by the majority of these vegetarians. This Pattern can be vegan if all dairy choices are comprised of fortified soy beverages (soymilk) or other plant-based dairy substitutes. Note that vegetarian adaptations of the USDA Food Patterns were included in the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines*. However, those adaptations did not modify the underlying structure of the Patterns, but substituted the same amounts of plant foods for animal foods in each food group. In contrast, the current Healthy Vegetarian Pattern includes changes in food group composition and amounts, based on assessing the food choices of vegetarians. The Pattern is similar in meeting nutrient standards to the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, but somewhat higher in calcium and fiber and lower in vitamin D due to differences in the foods included.

To follow this Pattern, identify the appropriate calorie level, choose a variety of foods in each group and subgroup over time in recommended amounts, and limit choices that are not in nutrient-dense forms so that the overall calorie limit is not exceeded.

Table A5-1.

Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern: Recommended Amounts of Food From Each Food Group at 12 Calorie Levels



Calorie Level of Pattern ^a	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000
Food Group^b	Daily Amount^c of Food From Each Group (vegetable and protein foods subgroup amounts are per week)					
Vegetables	1 c-eq	1½ c-eq	1½ c-eq	2 c-eq	2½ c-eq	2½ c-eq
Dark-green vegetables (c-eq/wk)	½	1	1	1½	1½	1½
Red and orange vegetables (c-eq/wk)	2½	3	3	4	5½	5½
Legumes (beans and peas) (c-eq/wk) ^d	½	½	½	1	1½	1½
Starchy vegetables (c-eq/wk)	2	3½	3½	4	5	5
Other vegetables (c-eq/wk)	1½	2½	2½	3½	4	4
Fruits	1 c-eq	1 c-eq	1½ c-eq	1½ c-eq	1½ c-eq	2 c-eq
Grains	3 oz-eq	4 oz-eq	5 oz-eq	5½ oz-eq	6½ oz-eq	6½ oz-eq

Whole grains ^e (oz-eq/day)	1½	2	2½	3	3½	3½
Refined grains (oz-eq/day)	1½	2	2½	2½	3	3
Dairy	2 c-eq	2.5 c-eq	2.5 c-eq	3 c-eq	3 c-eq	3 c-eq
Protein Foods	1 oz-eq	1½ oz-eq	2 oz-eq	2½ oz-eq	3 oz-eq	3½ oz-eq
Eggs (oz-eq/wk)	2	3	3	3	3	3
Legumes (beans and peas) (oz-eq/wk) ^d	1	2	4	4	6	6
Soy products (oz-eq/wk)	2	3	4	6	6	8
Nuts and seeds (oz-eq/wk)	2	2	3	5	6	7
Oils	15 g	17 g	17 g	22 g	24 g	27 g
Limit on Calories for Other Uses, calories (% of calories)^{f,g}	190 (19%)	170 (14%)	190 (14%)	180 (11%)	190 (11%)	290 (15%)

^{a,b,c} See [Appendix 3. USDA Food Patterns: Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern, notes a through c \(/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-3/#table-a3-note-a\)](#).

^d About half of total legumes are shown as vegetables, in cup-eq, and half as protein foods, in oz-eq. Total legumes in the Patterns, in cup-eq, is the amount in the vegetable group plus the amount in protein foods group (in oz-eq) divided by 4:



Calorie Level of Pattern	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400
Total Legumes (beans and peas) (c-eq/wk)	1	1	1½	2	3	3	3½	4

^{e,f,g} See [Appendix 3, notes d through f \(/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-3/#table-a3-note-d\)](/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-3/#table-a3-note-d).