



## ARTICLE

# How do I plan a vegetarian menu for my child?

**A vegetarian diet can be equally nutritious to a diet that includes meat/chicken/fish or eggs. To make sure your child gets enough of all the nutrients needed for a growing child, their vegetarian diet must.**

**5 mins read**

## **Vegetarian Meal Plan for Kids**

### **How to make meals interesting for your child?**

A child's vegetarian meal plan can be equally nutritious to a diet that includes meat/chicken/fish or eggs. As a mother, you have to come up with new meal ideas with ensured nutrition. To make sure your child gets enough of all the nutrients needed for a growing child, a balanced diet chart for a vegetarian must include:

- a) Protein alternatives such as nuts, soy, milk & milk products, legumes and tofu.
- b) Energy for growth and development from whole grains or multigrain cereals, quality fats & oils in Indian veg diet plan in right amounts
- c) Iron to prevent anaemia
- d) Vitamin B12 for the body to help in metabolism and to make red blood cells
- e) Vitamin D and calcium to prevent bone disease

**The key to being an expert parent is to plan a nutrient-dense vegetarian menu for kids consisting of all the essential food groups**



### **Importance of a vegetarian diet chart for your child**

The period between 2 to 5 years of age is characterized by an increase in activity levels. This coupled with the small tummy of your child means that a range of vital nutrients are needed at this growing stage in the small volumes of food that your child consumes.

To make sure your child gets enough of all the nutrients needed for growth, the vegetarian meals for children must include the following food groups in appropriate portions:

FOOD GROUPS	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (1-3 YEARS)	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (4-6 YEARS)	SUGGESTED 1 SERVING OF FOOD	ROLE AND FUNCTIONS
Cereals	2	4	1 small chapatti/1 small spce of bread/2 tbsp. of raw rice/2 tbsp. of raw pasta/2 tbsp. of raw dapa/2 tbsp. of sooji/2 tbsp. of raw oats	Cereals are an important source of energy, carbohydrate, protein and fibre, as well as containing a range of micronutrients such as vitamin E, some of the B vitamins, magnesium and zinc. Fortified cereals with iron helps growth and enhances learning abipty.
Pulses and legumes	1	1	2 tbsp. raw pulses/legumes/beans/lentils	Pulses are low fat source of protein, with a high fibre content. Protein is needed for your child's muscle growth and repair. Seed/legumes will be much easier to digest and assimilate more nutrients if sprouted.

FOOD GROUPS	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (1-3 YEARS)	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (4-6 YEARS)	SUGGESTED 1 SERVING OF FOOD	ROLE AND FUNCTIONS
Milk and milk product	5	5	1 small cup (100 ml) milk/ 1 small cup curd (100 g)	Milk and milk products are rich sources of calcium- good for bones, muscles and teeth. Vitamin D is derived from milk and helps the body absorb minerals, pke calcium and phosphorus
Vegetables				
Roots and tubers	½	1	1 cup chopped raw potato/ carrot/ turnips/onions etc.	Try to have baked/steamed potato instead of fried to ensure their health benefits.
Green leafy vegetables	½	1	1 cup chopped raw green leafy vegetables like Spinach/fenugreek/bathua/mustard leaves etc.	Try to incorporate Green leafy vegetables every day in different forms to keep your child healthy.
Other vegetables	½	1	1 cup chopped raw other vegetables	Include seasonal and colourful vegetables to enjoy benefits of antioxidants.
Fruits	1	5	1 medium banana/1 apple/ pear/ orange/ 1 katori chopped papaya/ pineapple etc.	Go for a variety of seasonal fruits- rich sources of antioxidants, various vitamins and minerals.

FOOD GROUPS	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (1-3 YEARS)	SERVINGS REQUIRED/DAY (4-6 YEARS)	SUGGESTED 1 SERVING OF FOOD	ROLE AND FUNCTIONS
Fats and oil	5	5	1 tsp of vegetable oil/ ghee/butter/ mayonnaise/ cheese spread etc. Soy oil/walnuts/flaxseeds are rich in omega -3 fats.	Include healthy vegetable based oils as olive/mustard/rice bran/soybean etc. Avoid trans fats and saturated oils. Foods containing omega-3 fats help your child's brain development and vision.
Sugar	3	4	1 tsp of table sugar/jaggery powder/ honey/jam etc.	Try to limit sugary foods rich in trans fats and low in nutrients.



## Delicious vegetarian options for your toddler

The diet chart for vegetarian kids should consist of small and frequent meals (3 major meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner and 3-4 small meal snacks) in a day. You can try variations while trying out new vegetarian breakfast ideas and veggie dishes for toddlers.

Following are few healthy meal options:

BREAKFAST OPTIONS	SNACK OPTIONS	MAIN MEAL OPTIONS (LUNCH/DINNER)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Besan chilla with vegetables</li><li>• Stuffed vegetable/paneer paratha</li><li>• Vegetable/paneer sandwich</li><li>• Sooji vegetable upma</li><li>• Vegetable idli</li><li>• Moong dal chilla</li><li>• Cereals with milk/curd</li><li>• Whole wheat vegetable dalia/dalia with milk and fruit</li><li>• Whole grain bread with peanut butter and banana</li><li>• Milkshake with fruit to accompany the main meal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fruits</li><li>• Kebabs</li><li>• Dhokla</li><li>• Carrot kheer</li><li>• Fruit smoothies</li><li>• Peanuts/makhana</li><li>• Almonds/raisins/dates etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MAIN MEAL OPTIONS (LUNCH/DINNER)</li><li>• Rice and Sabzi or Dal</li><li>• Vegetable Khichdi</li><li>• Colorful vegetable pulao with paneer/curd/dal</li><li>• Roti made with wheat &amp; soya flour to accompany with dal/channa/mix vegetable</li><li>• Rice and saag paneer or channa (chick peas)</li><li>• Phulkas with mixed vegetable curry</li></ul>