

# Vegetarianism: good or bad thing



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As the young boy gazes longingly at the meaty burger poster on display in a fast food chain, a repulsed vegetarian looks on in dismay. Since the beginning of time we humans have eaten animals in order to survive, but being humans some of us have developed a conscience towards all the brutal mass murdering of animals for meat and with all of these horror stories about what is really in our humble hotdogs for example, it is no surprise that more and more people are becoming vegetarians. We now have all of these meat alternatives that claim to be better for our health, which gives the vegetarians a brownie point, but is an anti-meat lifestyle really that good for our health? Are we really giving animals a better life? Should we all change our diets? The meat alternative. This new type of food that promises to taste just as good as meat but with much less fat making it far more healthy for us human.

Sounds great? What these large corporations fail to tell consumers is what Fusarium Venenatum, or more commonly known to us as the brand Quorn, really is. This meat alternative is in fact a type fungus. It does not sound so appetizing now, does it? The CSPI (Centre for Science in the Public Interest) have made numerous attempts to sue the brand with claims such as Quorn can cause allergic reactions that in severe cases may trigger anaphylactic shock which could result in death. Although 50 cases of this have been found in the UK alone, Marlow Foods (the company that owns the Quorn brand) still deny the fact and say that the CPSI are merely lobbying for publicity.

Another negative of being vegetarian is that your diet lacks certain vital vitamins and minerals unless a very wide variety of fruit, veg and dietary supplements are included which is harder than it sounds.

For example, vitamin B12 is essential in any diet as it works with the folic acid in the body and converts protein, fats and carbohydrates into energy. The only vegetarian foods that contain traces of this vitamin are seaweed and something called tempeh but with the inconsistent, minute amount in each make them an insufficient form of attaining this vitamin. There are vitamin B12 injections available and these are crucial as a deficiency of this vitamin can cause fatigue, heart disease and strokes. This is just one missing vital vitamin but there are other vitamins and minerals that vegetarians are deprived of such as vitamin D, iron, zinc and copper, all very important nutrients for growing children. It is difficult to find a good source of amino acid in plant-based diets as meat is a good source of amino acid and non-meat diets do not contain the nine vital amino acids, therefore cannot provide nearly as much.

Shortage of this may produce tiredness, lack of motivation, poor performance on a whole and moodiness due to the constant changes in blood sugar levels. Despite all the cons of being vegetarian, it is not all doom and gloom! Research shows people who do live on a no-meat basis and do it right by taking the crucial vitamins and minerals that they lack have many health benefits, such as they have stronger immune systems, live on average 15 years longer than meat eaters, are 40% less likely to die from cancer, 20% less likely to die from other diseases, you have a 15% chance of dying of a heart disease compared to the 50% chance of a regular meat eater, it is likely you will be more slim and if you diet, the weight will stay off for up to seven years longer, your body will be detoxed which promotes better health and helps you get clearer skin, your bones will last longer, you

will not consume toxic chemicals and steroids that are in meats due to the animals diet and finally, you could prevent certain types of back problems or get rid of some if you already have some. Being vegetarian not only helps you, but it also helps the environment. Eating meat is one of the largest sources of global warming, by not eating meat you help conserve natural resources. To produce just one pound of meat, approximately sixteen pounds of grain, over two thousand gallons of water and at least one gallon of fuel. This is a stupendous amount of resources for just one pound of meat.

If we were to change all livestock farming to agricultural farming, there would be enough arable land, enough edible grain and water that this would end world hunger. If the meat-eating population was reduced, large amounts of rainforest would be saved daily. For the daily meat intake in the U. S. the equivalent of seven football fields of rainforest is cut down just for cattle-grazing. And for every beef burger, approximately fifty-five square feet of forest has been destroyed.

This large amount of deforestation is now affecting the climate because there are not enough trees to convert the