

# The different diets essay sample

[Food & Diet](#)



## 1. 1 Introduction

During the past few decades of the 20th century, the popularity of vegetarianism increased in the United States and Europe this was seen by the number of people that claimed to be vegetarian and the increase in published literature promoting the health benefits of vegetarian diets.[1] Becoming a vegetarian, vegan and non vegetarians (meat eaters) can all be reasonable alternatives for health if intelligent practices such as making sure your diet is balanced are followed and if certain principles of healthy eating and lifestyle are payed attention to. Many people practicing different diets tend to pay more attention on the positive sides than the negative sides of adapting a diet, that is why I decided to investigate how the weight and health varies with different diets and I considered that the topic appropriate for further investigation and the focus of this essay will be on How different diets: vegetarian, vegan and a meat centered diet has an effect on the health in areas like weight, blood pressure, body mass index and how often you get sick(common cold).

### 1. 1. 2 Common Cold [2]

Common cold is a viral infection of the upper respiratory system, including the nose, throat, sinuses, eustachian tubes, trachea, larynx, and bronchial tubes. The common cold is the most common illness to strike any part of the body. It is estimated that the average person has more than 50 colds during a lifetime.

A few conditions that can lead to a person getting a cold are:

- \* poor nutrition.
  
- \* smoking.
  
- \* emotional stress.
  
- \* fatigue and overwork.
  
- \* living or working in crowded conditions.

### 1. 1. 3 Blood Pressure

Blood is carried from the heart to all parts of the body in vessels called arteries. Blood pressure is the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. Each time the heart beats (about 60-70 times a minute at rest), it pumps out blood into the arteries. When the heart beats and pumps out the blood that is when blood pressure is highest. This is called systolic pressure. The blood pressure falls when the heart is at rest, between beats. This is known as the diastolic pressure.

Blood pressure is always given as these two numbers, the systolic and diastolic pressure. They are written one above or before the other, such as 110/80 mmHg. The top number is usually the systolic and the bottom the diastolic. When the two measurements are written down, the systolic pressure is the first or top number, and the diastolic pressure is the second or bottom number (for example, 110/80).

The blood pressure is usually read for example “ 110 over 80.”[3]

### 1. 1. 4 Body Mass Index [4]

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BMI stands for Body Mass Index. It is a number that shows body weight adjusted for height. BMI can be calculated with simple math, this is done by dividing the body weight by the height squared.

$BMI = \frac{\text{weight}}{\text{height}^2}$

Categories for BMI

Table 1

BMI

WEIGHT STATUS

Below 18.5

Underweight

18.5 – 24.9

Normal

25.0 – 29.9

Overweight

30.0 and above

Obese

2

00511-062

08/09

## 1. 2 Background Information

### 1. 2. 1 Who is a vegetarian? [5]

A vegetarian can be described as a person who refrains from or avoids eating meat including, chicken, fish, pork, beef or slaughter by-products. Some vegetarians may or may not choose to eat animal products such as eggs, milk, gelatin, or honey.

There are different types of vegetarians:

Some of the main types of vegetarian diets include:

1. Lacto vegetarian diet
2. Lacto-ovo vegetarian diet
3. Ovo vegetarian diet

#### Lacto vegetarian diet

This a vegetarian diet that avoids eating meat but does allow the consumption of diary products such as milk, butter, cheese, creame and yogurt etc. This diet does not however allow the consumption of eggs eventhough it is a diary product.

” Lacto” is the Latin word for milk.

#### Lacto-ovo vegetarian diet

A lacto-ovo vegetarian diet is a diet that involves the consumption of eggs and dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, and butter. It does not however allow the consumption of meat of any kind which includes pork, beef, chicken etc..

” Lacto” means milk and ” ovo” means egg.

Ovo vegetarian diet

An ovo vegetarian can be described as a person who avoids eating all kinds of meat and

dairy products but is allowed to consume eggs.

” Ovo” means egg. Ovo vegetarians are sometimes nicknamed ” eggetarians”.

1. 2. 2 Who is a Vegan? [6]

A person who refrains from eating any animal product can be referred to as a Vegan. Vegans do not eat any animal products such as, milk, cheese, eggs, honey, gelatin etc.. Many vegans choose not to wear clothes made from animal products, some examples of these products are wool, silk, and leather. Many of these vegans also choose not to wear makeup tested on animals.

1. 2. 3 Who is a Meat eater?

This is a person who eats meat and all animal products such as eggs, milk, cheese etc.. as a part of their diet.

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#### 1. 2. 4 Why do people become vegetarians or vegans? [5]

People decide to become vegetarians or are raised as vegetarians for many different reasons. Some common motivators include;

a) Ethical Reasons: Some people are against the killing of animals. Many of these people believe that we should not use animals for food or products from them such as their fur, or skin for leather, which require the killing of the animal, because they believe that animals are just as important in the world as people.

b) Environmental Reasons: Some people believe that we could feed many more people in the world by using the land we have to grow crops in order to feed people nutritious food, they also believe that it is a waste of resources to use land to grow grain or other crops that are fed to animals.

c) Health Reasons: Some people believe that a plant based or a vegetarian diet supplies them with a higher amount of carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables to help protect them against many diseases including cancers and heart disease.

Some people become vegetarians and vegans for religious reasons also. Many people become vegetarians and vegans for a combination of the reasons stated above.(5)

#### 1. 2. 5 What are the advantages of becoming a vegetarian or Vegan? [5]

There are a number of advantages to becoming or being a vegetarian or vegan.

\* A Vegetarian and Vegan diet helps to increase heart health. This is because an average vegetarian consumes more nuts which often serve as a supplemental form of protein. Nuts contain "good" fats such as omega-3 and omega-6, this promotes good heart health by reducing "bad" cholesterol and unclogging arteries. Vegetarians also consume soy milk in addition to nuts which serves as a replacement to milk, it also helps to reduce "bad" cholesterol and has been linked to good heart health.

\* Vegetarians and Vegans enjoy increased skin health. In addition to consuming larger quantities of nuts, which contain healthful oils, vegetarians and vegans tend to consume more fruits and vegetables, which are linked to good skin health because they are rich in essential vitamins. Some of these vitamins include vitamin A and vitamin E. These fruits and vegetables also contain high amounts of fiber which helps flush toxins out of the body, contributing to better skin health.

\* Another advantage of becoming or being a vegetarian or vegan is that vegetarians and vegans have an increased natural consumption of antioxidants. Vitamin C and Vitamin E are two strong antioxidants which are commonly found in vegetarians meals. Antioxidants are foods that help prevent cancer by destroying free radicals. Foods containing vitamin C include: tomatoes, citrus fruits, peppers, kiwis etc.. vitamin E can be found in wheat germ, brown rice, walnuts, seed oils, a combination of these foods make up or is part of a well-balanced vegetarian or vegan diet.



Not only can a vegetarian and vegan diet be nutritional sufficient it can also help prevent cancer, help you have a better skin health and causes you to have a healthier heart.

As there are advantages of becoming or being a vegan or vegetarian there are also disadvantages.

Other advantages of vegetarianism and veganism are;

- \* Increased energy.
- \* More food resources and food growing space.
- \* More humane treatment for animals.
- \* Improved quality of life because of lower incidence of some chronic diseases.
- \* Less expensive food sources.
- \* Lower death rates for some chronic diseases.
- \* Beneficial for overweight individuals.
- \* Beneficial for women with premenstrual syndrome.
- \* Beneficial for individuals with diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.

1. 2. 6 Are there any disadvantages of becoming or being a vegetarian or vegan? [6]

Some people think that the main risk is a lack of protein, but that is not the case at all because if a person eats a well balanced diet of vegetables, nuts, fruits, grains it makes up for the protein meat eaters get from consuming meat.

Vegans must pay attention to their intake of vitamin B12 since this vitamin is mostly found in animal products and a lack of this vitamin can cause a variety of irreversible neurological problems.

The most important health risks are related to a lack of certain vitamins and minerals especially vitamin B12. For this reason vegetarians and vegans must learn everything they can about a vegetarian and vegan diet in order to make it adequate.

#### 1. 2. 7 Advantages of a meat centered diet [7]

Meat is an excellent source of protein.

Protein is an essential nutrient which helps to build and repair body tissues such as muscles and organs, and is needed for growth and development of an individual. Most products produced by animals such as eggs, fish, meat, poultry contain high amounts of proteins, consuming these foods help supply the body with adequate and sufficient amounts of all the amino acids needed by the body.

A meat centered diet contains significant amounts of zinc which is important for a healthy immune system.

Meat contains more iron than most foods, and it is more easily used in the body than iron from other sources. The consumption of meat helps in the absorption of iron from foods like cereals and vegetables. Iron is also vital for making red blood cells. It also contains high amounts of niacin, vitamin B12, riboflavin, pyridoxine and thiamin which are all sources of B-complex vitamins.

#### 1. 2. 8 Some health risks of eating a meat centered diet [7]

As there are advantages of eating meat, there are also disadvantages. Listed below are some health risks of eating meat.

- \* Eating a meat centered diet can cause an increased risk of bowel cancer, this was found for people who ate more than two servings of red meat per week.

- \* Excessive amounts of red meat can lead to a higher risk of osteoporosis (a disease in which bones become fragile and are more likely to break) due to an acid

byproduct from digesting very large amounts of proteins.

- \* Red meat is high in saturated fat and cholesterol which can lead to heart disease, cancer and other harmful diseases.

- \* Eating red meat every day can double the risks of Arthritis.

- \* The Mediterranean diet, which is low in red meat, has been shown to decrease the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

## 2 . HYPOTHESIS:

A diet can be healthy whether it is a vegetarian diet, vegan diet or a meat centered diet. A balanced diet is a diet that contains all the appropriate nutrients in their right proportions. Examples of these nutrients include vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, water, minerals and fats.

Eating excess or too little of some dietary components makes the diet unbalanced with might lead to malnutrition. A lack of a particular nutrient in the body can cause deficiency diseases, eventhough some disorders that are related to diets are due to excess eating. If the participants in this investigation all consumed a balanced diet then they would all be healthy especially in areas like having a normal body mass index. This is what I expect to show in the results of the investigation.

## 3. Method

In order to carry out this investigation thirty participants were needed which included;

- \* 10 meat eaters

- \* 10 vegetarians

- \* 5 vegans

Participants had to be teenagers.

> the following information was needed from each participant;

- \* height

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- \* weight
- \* blood pressure
- \* BMI
- \* how often they got a cold

The method used in this investigation was:

- \* First writing out a survey consisting of questions that would help in the investigation. The questions were meant to relate to the health of the individual and other basic information about the individual such as age, height etc. (see appendix)
- \* These surveys were handed out to individuals willing to participate in the investigation.
- \* The participants were asked to wait for about 10 to 20 mins so that the body would be at rest with a normal heart beat of 60-70 times per minute (see introduction) blood pressure was then taken by the school nurse.
- \* The information got from the survey was used in the investigation for conclusions to be drawn concerning the health of vegetarians, vegans and meat eaters so that conclusions would be drawn as to which diet was healthier.