



# The Leading Voice of Nutrition *in Australia*



## Health Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet

A balanced vegetarian diet can offer many health benefits.

It can help protect against:

- Heart disease
- Many types of cancer
- Hypertension (high blood pressure) and stroke
- Overweight and obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Constipation
- Diverticular disease
- Gallstones
- Gout

The vegetarian diet is

- Lower in fat, particularly saturated fat because saturated fat mainly comes from animal products
- High in dietary fibre and antioxidants from fruits, vegetables and legumes
- Lower risk of cancer - excess meat consumption (particularly red meat) is associated with a high risk of colorectal cancer.

There is growing evidence that many of the diseases in our society are linked with poor nutrition and an unhealthy lifestyle. A balanced vegetarian diet fits well with the healthy eating recommendations for all Australians.

As well as these health benefits, vegetarian diets have economic and ecological advantages. Compared to animal food production, plant food production uses less land, water, phosphate fertilizers and fossil fuels; and causes less greenhouse gas emissions. For further information, see the DAA Vegetarian Interest Group 'Vegetarian Diets and the Environment' fact sheet.