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Vegetarian Diet Sheet

Essential nutrients before and after pregnancy and advise on a vegetarian diet:

Phytoestrogens: see sheets given.

Folic acid

Broccoli – 170g (6oz.) purple sprouting broccoli steamed in very little water provides over ½ of the recommended daily intake of folic acid; also a great source of iron, anti-oxidants, b-vitamins and zinc.

Lettuce: especially bitter salad greens like watercress, rocket, artichokes and endive, but other lettuce is also fine.

B12

Seaweed - one of the few non-animal sources of B12.

Yeast extract, Brewers yeast – also provide numerous other B – vitamins.

Vitamin E

Thought to be ‘the’ fertility vitamin. High amounts found in wheat germ oil.

Other sources: watercress, alfalfa, raspberry leaf, dandelion leaf and seaweeds, wheat sprouts, pumpkin seeds (also very rich in zinc).

Calcium and Magnesium

It has been found that dairy produce doesn’t always provide the right ratio of calcium and magnesium for maximum absorption. So, it is good to obtain some of your daily calcium/magnesium needs from other sources. These are:

Nuts and nut spreads – cashew, hazelnut, almond, tahini (these are also good sources of essential fatty acids).

Green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, cabbage, lettuce.

Sprouts, especially alfalfa; nettles, parsley, watercress, dandelion and kelp.

Lentils and pulses (avoid kidney beans) these are also excellent sources of protein.

Try sprouting some of your pulses/ lentils before steaming/cooking adding to stir-fries or eating raw in salads or in a sandwich. This releases essential nutrients and enzymes which makes digestion and assimilation much more efficient.

Iron

Nettles – pick the fresh young tops and cook as you would spinach or prepare a delicious soup out of them. Also as a nourishing infusion.

Other sources: dandelion, chickweed, kelp, parsley; soaked dried apricots, prunes, blackstrap molasses, green leafy vegetables, esp. broccoli.

Iron inhibitors: lack of high quality proteins, black tea and coffee.

Zinc: watercress, pumpkin seeds, alfalfa sprouts.

Essential fatty acids: see sheets given.

Protein sources

Lentils – red (these cook quickest), brown, green, puy lentils (these sprout particularly easily and quickly).

Pulses - pinto beans, black-eyed beans, butter beans, chickpeas etc.

Soak over-night and cook well in plenty of water until well done.

Tofu/tempeh – plain, smoked, pre-marinated. Excellent easily absorbed protein and very rich in calcium. (Tips: Drain water well and squeeze dry in a clean kitchen towel to extract any excess water. This prevents tofu falling apart and turning mushy during cooking. Keep remains in water in a sealed tub in fridge; this should keep up to a week if water is changed regularly.)

Marinate at least ¼- ½ hr. in soy or tamari sauce, add fresh chilli, garlic, ginger for added flavour. Stir fry sliced, or cubed add to veggy stir fries, curries, stews or eat raw as a snack or in salads. Also lovely grilled.

Recipes

Hummous:

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| 1 can chickpeas or one mug full soaked and cooked chickpeas | 3-4 tbsp. Tahini (sesame paste) 1-2 cloves garlic, crushed |
| 3 tblsp. Olive, flax seed or sunflower oil juice of ½ - 1 fresh lemon | optional additions: ½ tsp. turmeric powder, some fresh or dried ginger, pinch chilli powder, fresh herbs e.g. parsley etc |

Variations: use fresh orange juice and a tsp. of cider vinegar instead of lemon juice, works esp. well with garlic, turmeric and ginger.

Blend everything in a food blender until smooth, you may need to add some water or stock if too dry. Alternatively pound in a mortar with pestle until smooth.

Freezes well and keeps several days in fridge, takes about 5-10 mins. to make.

Lentil soup/ dahl:

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| 1 mug of dry lentils | 1 onion finely chopped |
| 1 ½ litre stock/ water | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 stick celery/ piece celeriac – chopped | 2 tsp. curry powder |
| 3 carrots – sliced or chopped | 2 cloves garlic chopped/ crushed |
| 2 potatoes- cut into small cubes | small piece fresh ginger chopped |
| 1 stick of leek – sliced | |

Saute veggies 5 mins (optional) add lentils, spices and saute 2 mins more. Add stock bring to boil, simmer for approx. 30- 45 mins (depending on lentil type) or until lentils are soft and well cooked. Garlic and ginger are best added towards end for optimum flavour. Puree or eat chunky. Depending whether you want it as a soup or with rice you can vary intensity of flavour and liquid content.

You can just throw everything together in one pot and not bother with sautee stage if you are in a hurry and that works fine too. Red lentils are definitely quicker, brown lentils have a lovely smokey flavour and work well with dried herbs, salt/pepper, onion, spuds and carrots and stock but take a little longer to cook.

This recipe is just a guideline, a multitude of variations are possible.

NOTE:

Quorn and tvp are o.k. to use occasionally but are quite a processed and difficult to digest form of protein so are probably best avoided as a sole protein source.

Eggs and small amounts of cheese can also be incorporated as protein sources.