

PAEDIATRIC VEGAN DIETS

If a child follows a vegan diet they will not consume any meat, dairy, eggs or other products of animal origin. The diet contains foods sourced from plants – including vegetables, grains, fruits and nuts – and foods made from plants. Vegan infants will also require additional nutrient supplementation.

Non-supplemented vegan diets increase the risk of nutrient deficiencies which can lead to serious health conditions

Risk of nutrient deficiencies



Vitamin B12



Calcium



Protein



Zinc



Possible serious health effects of nutrient deficiencies



Low bone mineral density



Blood disorders



Neurological disorders



Life threatening malnutrition



Parents pursuing a vegan diet for their child must seek and strictly follow medical and dietary advice relating to supplementation to ensure that their infant has a healthy and balanced diet.



It is also important that vegan mothers who are breastfeeding their child also supplement their diets, even if there is no obvious sign of deficiency in the mother.

References

- Fewtrell, M., Bronsky, J. et al. Complementary Feeding: A Position Paper by the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition (ESPGHAN) Committee on Nutrition. *JPGN*. 2017. V. 64. No. 1. pp. 119-132.
- Van Winckel, M. Vegetarian and vegan diets; pros and cons in infants, children and adolescents. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. Prague, Czech Republic, 11 May, 2017.
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