

ONE BITE

VEGAN MAGAZINE

*Party time!
Vegan grazing
tables*

*Would you eat
lab-grown meat?*

*Win a Copy
The Rawsome
Vegan Cookbook*

*Do vegan kids need
supplements?*

Your guide to vegan wine

Your Vegan Nutrition Questions Answered

Veronika Powell

As part of this series, we took to the [One Bite Vegan Facebook Group](#) to find out what you'd like to put to our nutritionist, Veronika Powell from Viva! Here's this issue's question...

Do little kids need extra supplements when on a vegan diet? Especially if they're a picky eater?

A vegan diet is suitable for everyone but little kids often refuse to eat what's good for them. Their needs slightly change depending on their age:

Before six months - your baby needs only breastmilk, or formula milk if breastfeeding isn't possible. If you're breastfeeding, you may want to consider giving your baby vitamin D drops ([such as these](#)) to ensure your baby gets enough of this important vitamin - recommended dose is 10 mcg (or 400 IU) a day. Also make sure your daily vitamin B12 intake is sufficient (at least 5 mcg) so enough of it passes into your breastmilk.

Six months to one year - you can start introducing pureed or mashed foods on a spoon. These should include good iron sources, such as mashed beans, lentils, chickpeas and tofu, all without added sugar or salt. They are best combined with other foods, such as nut or seed butters, avocado, sweet potatoes, bananas and other soft fruit and vegetables. You can also try bread cut into strips, mashed pasta, age-suitable cereal products (low sugar and salt), porridge

and a little soya yogurt. Aside from breastmilk or formula, try giving your baby small amounts of water and home-made fruit smoothies or purees for an added vitamin dose.

Continue with vitamin D drops and depending on what your baby eats, you may need to consider their vitamin A and C intakes, also. It's best to consult with your healthcare provider to decide if your baby needs multivitamin drops.

Toddlers - as your child starts eating more solid food and has less breastmilk or formula, adjust the amount of food to their needs - feed them small amounts and often. Alongside breastfeeding or formula, you can also start giving your baby special soya milk, fortified specifically for children over one year old. If your baby is allergic to soya, try fortified oat milk but only as an addition, not the main energy source.



Vegan toddlers need a reliable source of vitamin B12 (1mcg a day) and you can achieve this through fortified drinks and yoghurts, nutritional yeast, low-sodium yeast extract or a supplement. The latter may be advisable as toddlers also need 15mcg (or 600 IU) of vitamin D, 7mg of iron and 70mcg of iodine.

Three to six year-olds - your child needs all the above and a lot of energy so feed them three

main meals and two or three snacks. Include five portions of fruit and vegetables, starchy foods such as wholemeal bread, pasta, brown rice, root vegetables, sweet potatoes and potatoes, pulses, nuts and seeds as butters because these eliminate any potential choking hazard, calcium fortified yogurts and drinks. It's best to steer clear of low-fat foods because children need all the energy they can get!

HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD TO EAT NUTRITIOUS FOODS?

Keep a bowl of fruit on the kitchen table and always add fresh fruit to lunchboxes.

Spread nut or seed butter on thinly sliced fruit and stick raisins on top.

Add chopped fresh, frozen or dried fruit to cereals, yogurt, ice cream, pancakes etc.

Offer your child freshly cut vegetable sticks for snacks.

Finely chop or blend vegetables into a salsa to put on savory meals.

Blended vegetable soup, with added lentils or beans, can be super nutritious and disguises what veg it contains! Same goes for pasta and other sauces.

Smoothies are a great way to add fruit, veg and nut butters to children's diet!

Have both raw and cooked vegetables at mealtimes so that your child can choose what they want.

Let your child choose from healthy foods in shops – having a choice between healthy options is better than making them choose between, say, fruit and sweets.

Multivitamin?

Because very young children need several vitamins that are best delivered in a supplement and often there's a risk they wouldn't get enough relying on breastmilk, formula or foods alone, it's best to give them [multivitamin drops](#)

or [chewable multivitamins](#). There are several vegan preparations on the market but do check the age recommendations to make sure your child is getting the right amount of everything.



Viva!Health is a part of the charity Viva!, We monitor scientific research linking diet to health and provide accurate information on which you can make informed choices about the food you eat - www.vivahealth.org.uk.



About the author...

Veronika Powell, MSc Biology, Viva! Health Senior Campaigner & Researcher - www.vivahealth.org.uk. Veronika is a biologist and for the last eight years her work's focus has been vegan nutrition and health. She's an expert on vegan food issues and a major part of her work is helping people live a healthy and sustainable vegan life.