



Being a vegan is a lifestyle choice, which one adopts if he/she wants to become more healthy or for ethical reasons. A vegan is a person, who does not use any animal products either in their food or their clothing. A vegan diet, is not just a diet, but a way of life. Today, we explore the benefits of adopting a vegan [diet](#) and lifestyle.

If we ate according to what nature planned for us, we would rarely be sick and we would eat vegan. Eating vegan means eating foods that come from plants. **No meat, fish, chicken, eggs, no milk or dairy products.** Anatomically, physiologically and instinctively we are vegan. Think about it. If we go to a farm or orchard and see fruits and vegetable ripe and hanging our instinct is to pick and eat it. But if we see a chicken walk by, we don't feel like pouncing on it and tearing it apart, leave alone eating it. A dog could have quite the opposite reaction though. Carnivores eat their prey and then don't eat for a long time. Herbivores eat / graze all day long, and so do we. But if we eat the food that a carnivore would eat but as often as an herbivore what do you expect? Disease, right? And that's exactly what's happening.

Vegetarians get the same diseases as non vegetarians. That's because meat and milk have the same composition - high protein, high fat and no [fibre](#). But that's not what we need. I know that we all think that milk is healthy, even though 65% of it is adulterated but its really not. Not even the 35% unadulterated milk. Milk is a food that every female mammal makes for its young. Cows increase their weight 10 times in the first year and cows milk contains the nutrients for that kind of growth. So now you know why we have an obese society! Just 30 years ago milk was virtually unknown in South East Asia. Traditional Chinese,

Japanese, Thai and all other South East Asian countries food contain no dairy products. Heart disease, diabetes, cancer and [obesity](#) were relatively less. These are lifestyle diseases, caused by our lifestyle . And that's the good news. They can be reversed by following a whole plant based [diet](#) – full of fruits vegetables, nuts and seeds, and whole grains. Infact our traditional [diet](#) was this – daal, chawal, roti subzi and katchumber.!

Most of us find it hard to give up milk, because of our conditioning. Hardly anyone likes milk by itself, but, it's the milk products that do us in – curds, buttermilk, cheese, paneer, ice cream, cream, butter and sweets. The smell of the chicken or kebabs is tempting to those who are accustomed to non-veg. All this is because of habits. But habits can be broken. This is why we recommend trying a plant based [diet](#) for a month and see how you feel. Don't forget to get all your lab tests done a the beginning and end of this month, including tests for vitamin B12 and vitamin D. Supplement these two [vitamins](#) with the help of your doctor if needed. You may find that you feel better, have lost a few kilos and have more energy! By the time the month is over and you start eating the things that you ate before, they may not hold the same charm! You are now a step closer to eating according to instincts.

Data Courtesy: **Dr Nandita Shah is the founder and director of Sharan. Her passion is to spread information about the benefits of a plant based diet for health, the animals and the environment. Contact her at nandita@sharan-india.org*

**Images courtesy: © Thinkstock photos/ Getty Images*