

LIFE & STYLE

Published: October 5, 2009 14:42 IST | Updated: October 5, 2009 14:42 IST October 5, 2009

Join the band vegan

• [LAKSHMI IYER](#)



Make A start: Having a plant-based diet and avoiding refined foods, white rice, maida, oil and sugar is a good way to begin. Photo: Raju V

People from all walks of life are now turning vegan to stay fit and healthy

A gentle, green breeze is energising Bengaluru's gardens, college campuses, shopping malls, IT hubs, office spaces and living rooms with new vitality. It is sparking dinner table conversations, giving people a healthy glow and a mental high, and best of all it is giving a new momentum to the word, 'Earth Saviour'. Welcome to the world of vegans.

Veganism is a type of vegetarian diet that excludes meat, eggs, dairy products and all other animal-derived ingredients. People from all walks of life are turning vegan effortlessly and enjoying the health benefits.

So, what are the health benefits of being vegan? Amrita Dutta, a content writer with a corporate firm says, "I have been a vegetarian for the last 19 years. Early this year, I began transitioning into being vegan. Since then, my chronic wheezing has stopped and besides, I can concentrate better, I have become more energetic and my joint pains have disappeared".

Gopi Shankar, a consultant, who has been vegan for a month now, says, "I feel lighter and more energetic and since I am an asthmatic, I wheeze lesser now".

Arun R, a PhD student in Computer Science at IISc, and a vegan for two years says: "I have never felt more energetic, which I believe is due to my zero cholesterol and low saturated fat diet. I came second in the 10 km race and third in the four km race at IISc this year". Says Shankar Narayan, President of the Indian Vegan Society who was in the city recently, "At 30, before becoming completely vegan, I was feeling 60, and now at 45, being a vegan, I feel 20. I had many debilitating health problems. Most of them either disappeared or diminished".

Says Nandita Shah, who has been practising homeopathy for 28 years, "Many of my patients have been able to successfully reverse obesity." Nandita invites you to try out delicious vegan food at her Peas Vs Pills Workshops (<http://sharan-india.org>). She says, "Try being on whole food with a plant-based diet. Whole food means no refined foods, no white rice, no maida, oil and sugar, (instead of sugar, you can add jaggery) for just a month and see how you feel".

Jayasimha, a lawyer, campaign and legal advisor for People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) adds, "As deadly animal-borne diseases like SARS, mad cow disease and avian flu spread across the globe, adopting a meat-free diet is more important than ever".

What are the 'must read' books in this area? For starters, you can try, "Diet for a New America, The Food Revolution and Healthy at 100" by John Robbins and "The China Study" by Dr. T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell. For India, which is fast emerging as the heart attack capital of the world, with 50 million heart patients and over 30 million diabetic patients, being vegan is an absolute necessity in returning back to good health.

Like Amala Akkineni, Founder, Blue Cross of Hyderabad says, "To be vegan takes intelligence, compassion and discipline and reflects the inner and outer evolution of our race".

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Printable version | Aug 12, 2015 1:05:48 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/Food/join-the-band-vegan/article29122.ece>

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