

# Let's Talk About It

Barrington H. Brennen, MA, NCP  
Marriage & Family Therapist

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## I Am a Vegetarian, and So Is My Dog

Do you believe it? My dog is a vegetarian! Mr. Sergeant Brennen, the long-haired, good-looking, loving and loveable canine member of the Brennen family, does love to eat lettuce, tomatoes, broccoli, avocado pear, coconut, peas and rice, corn on the cob, soya milk, watermelon, and much more. It is true just that eating these things would not make my dog a vegetarian. Although I don't feed him any meat, he sometimes gets some when he visits his friend across the street--a handsome black Bahamian potcake. They tell us the dogs do need vegetables to live a healthy life. So give your dog some vegetables today.

If my dog can eat so much vegetables and enjoy it, what about me! I am not sure you will believe that I have never tasted any form of meat. This is why I am called a vegetarian. A vegetarian does not eat fish, red or white meats. Some people do not think that fish is not meat so they figure a vegetarian can eat fish. This is not so. Any creature, whether on land or sea that has flesh and blood is meat. However, some people only use fish for meat. This is okay. Some vegetarians eat animal products, such as eggs, milk, and cheese. We call them ovo-lacto vegetarians. I am a complete vegetarian, or a vegan. A vegan does not eat meat or any animal product.

### I FEEL GOOD

I was raised a vegetarian and have never been tempted to taste any form of meat. My parents are vegetarians, and so are my wife and young adult children. I feel good and have lots of energy. I have no headaches, back or stomach aches. I sleep well at nights and recover quickly from illnesses or accidental cuts to my skin. It is important to note the just avoiding meat is not the only thing that constitutes a healthy diet. Some vegetarians have very bad diets. They eat lots of sweets, refine foods, and consume an abundance of fat. On the other hand a healthy vegetarian diet includes an abundance of whole grains, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and fruits.

### GREAT BENEFITS OF THE VEGETARIAN DIET

There are tremendous benefits to be derived from a healthy vegetarian diet. Research tells us that vegetarians recover quicker after surgery because of a higher blood composition that promotes healing. Vegetarians have lower death rates from cancer, specifically colon and lung cancer. Vegetarian women have lower blood levels of estrogen, which may help to protect them from breast cancer. The risk of heart disease is linked to diets high in saturated fat, which is found mostly in animal foods and processed foods. Heart disease is much less common among vegetarian men, with vegans having the lowest risk of all.

Vegetarian men are at less risk of prostate cancer. This second leading cause of cancer death among men is not just an inevitable outcome of getting old; it is the result of a lifetime diet of animal fats. The fats stimulate the production of male hormones, which in turn spur prostate cancer cells to grow.

We also know that athletes do extremely better on a vegetarian diet. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a

noted vegetarian, is proud of his lifestyle and diet. He certainly has lots of power. Many of the world's top athlete cease consuming meat during training and performance because they discovered that they get better results. A research done at Loma Linda University shows that vegetarian athletes have a much shorter recovering time after a race than non vegetarian. My athletic son, Gerard, who runs the 100 meters, has proven this. He noticed that it only takes in a few minutes to recover while the other participants need sometimes ten or fifteen minutes more.

## **DISEASE AND THE VEGETARIAN**

Vegetarians are not immune to diseases or illnesses. We do get sick. Vegetarians also get cancer and other life-threatening illness, but the risk is greatly reduced. A vegetarian does get the common cold, flue, headache, etc, but not as frequently as a meat eater. In fact, there are some diseases that a vegetarian will not get. For example trichinosis, a terrible disease that comes from pork. Salmonella, E. coli is a serious deadly bacteria that is only found in meat. In countries where there is a high consumption of pork, conch, and red meat, there are high incidents of heart problems, diabetes, and cancers. Pork and conch have deadly levels of cholesterol. Pork is extremely high on fat which is dangerous to the heart and arteries.

## **WHAT IN THE WORLD DO VEGETARIANS EAT?**

I am sure you are wondering what do I eat to stay good-looking, healthy, and sexy? Let me first share with you some facts about fruits, vegetables and grain. Broccoli is one of the most nutritious vegetables. It has more protein, iron, vitamins, and minerals than cow milk. We certainly do not need cow milk to live. Humans are the only animals to go to another animal for milk. Soybean is known as a complete food. It is one of the richest sources of protein. In one hundred pounds of beef, there is only eighteen pounds of protein. In one hundred pounds of soybean, there are 40 pounds of protein. What a difference! It is also called a medicinal food because of its many properties that protect us from illnesses or prevent an onset of other medical problems. For instance, women who use soy have fewer problems with menopause and estrogen levels in their bodies. Bahamian pigeon peas is a rich source of protein. Avocado pear, much loved by Bahamians and Caribbean folks, is also a very high source of protein.

What then do I eat. I eat an abundance of vegetables, raw and cooked. Rice (whole grain, sometimes white), grits, potatoes, yams, peas, beans, whole grain cereals. I use soy for milk. It's delicious. I love making soups, especially broccoli/asparagus soup. My soups are so rich my son calls them nuclear bombs. They often include whole wheat dumplings, hand full of raw cashews, table spoon of wheat germ, combined with peas, vegetables, broccoli, asparagus. When you eat my soups you really have power.

## **GO FOR IT**

I hope this article stimulates someone to think differently about the vegetarian lifestyle. Try it, you will like it. Go the Adventist Book and Nutrition Center on Harold Road and see an abundance of vegetarian cook books that will make you life easy. Please remember, never stop eating meat before to intelligently evaluate your current diet. If you lack an abundance of vegetables or grains then add them before you change your diet. Eliminate the red meats first and take time to change. Have fun. Welcome to the vegetarian club. Write P.O. Box N-896, Nassau, Bahamas or call 393 2818 see this article or more on [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org)