



VEGAN DIETS AND THE UCLP®

This information sheet provides an overview of the Ultimate Cholesterol Lowering Plan® (UCLP®) in relation to vegan diets. Further resources about the UCLP® are available at heartuk.org.uk/uclp and comprehensive guidelines about vegan diets are available at vegansociety.com/nutrition.

CAN YOU FOLLOW THE UCLP® IF YOU EAT A VEGAN DIET?

The short answer is yes! The UCLP® is designed to suit a variety of eating patterns. Most of the tips are relevant to people eating a vegan diet. In fact, well-planned vegan diets fit well with these guidelines because they contain plenty of healthful plant foods like nuts, wholegrains, fruit, vegetables, beans, peas, and lentils.

THE UCLP® IS MADE UP OF 3 STEPS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO WORK THROUGH EACH STEP AT YOUR OWN PACE.

This information sheet is full of UCLP® vegan-friendly tips.

STEP 1: GETTING MOTIVATED

Getting into the right mindset is important to help you succeed. You have to feel ready, and have clear, strong reasons for making and sticking with long-term improvements to your eating habits. It is important to consider why you want to improve your cholesterol levels and how you could tackle potential difficulties that may come up in the future.

 **The UCLP® Step 1 Let's Get Motivated is full of helpful tips and advice.**

Our **UCLP® Vegan Checklist**: a 5-minute exercise to help you identify which parts of your current eating habits are already heart healthy and which parts need some attention.

Remember that it is helpful to set yourself realistic goals; try to make just one or two changes to your diet every couple of weeks.

STEP 2: HEART HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS

FATS

Considering the balance of fats in your diet is a great place to begin. Reducing the amount of saturated fat and replacing it with unsaturated fat can help to lower cholesterol levels. Although many plant-derived foods are naturally low in saturated fat, there are a few exceptions, including coconut products, palm and shea oils, and products made with them such as spreads, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, cheese alternatives, and other dairy alternatives. Aim to limit your intake of saturated fat and include sources of unsaturated fat in your meals, such as peanuts, nuts, seeds, and avocado.



EAT LESS...

Palm, shea, and coconut fats and oils, including vegan butter alternatives

Coconut-based alternatives to yogurt

Cheese alternatives made with coconut oil

Creamed coconut, canned coconut milk, and cream alternatives based on coconut or palm oils

Sauces based on coconut milk

Pastry pie toppings

Rich biscuits, e.g. chocolate, coconut, and sandwich varieties

Cakes, pastries, doughnuts, desiccated/shredded coconut, and chocolate

REPLACE WITH...

Other vegetable oils such as regular vegetable (rapeseed) and olive oils and spreads made from them

Fortified plain soya and oat-based alternatives to yogurt

- Nutritional yeast flakes sprinkled on dishes to add a cheesy flavour
- Small serving (no more than 30g per day) of cheese alternatives made with soya or nuts rather than coconut

Soya alternative to cream or replace with plain soya alternative to yogurt

Sauces based on tomatoes or use plain soya alternative to yogurt

- Savoury: use potato/squash/sweet potato toppings
- Sweet: filo pastry or crumble topping made with wholemeal flour and/or oats and vegetable spread

Plain or fruit biscuits, e.g. rich tea and garibaldi

- Fruit with a fortified plain soya alternative to yogurt
- Plain buns, e.g. hot cross/currant buns
- Homemade plain or fruit scones
- Fruit-based desserts, e.g. fruit salad, baked/stewed fruit, fruit crumble made with oats, vegetable spread, chopped nuts and seeds



Other heart healthy unsaturated fats that you can include in your diet: avocado, seeds, peanuts, and nuts – all unsalted/unsweetened varieties including walnuts, almonds, and cashews.

USING FOOD LABELS

Always check the **ingredients list** for coconut, shea, and palm fats and oils.

How to use the front of pack nutrition labels: for saturated fat, sugars, and salt, always **opt for green**, **careful with amber** and **try to avoid red**.

SATURATED FAT PER 100g of FOODS

LOW
1.5g
or less

MODERATE
1.5g-5.0g

HIGH
More than
5g
(or more than
6g per serve)

SATURATED FAT PER 100ml of DRINKS

LOW
0.75g
or less

MODERATE
0.75g-2.5g

HIGH
More than
2.5g
(or more than
3g per serve)

Cooking from scratch is the best way of putting yourself in the driving seat and taking control of your nutrition. As part of the Vegan and Thriving campaign, The Vegan Society has published some recipes at vegansociety.com/thriving. Each one is well-balanced, including multiple portions of fruit and vegetables. You can use the nutrition information to compare the amounts of saturated fat per serving.

STEP 2: HEART HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS CONTINUED...

A DAILY HELPING OF OMEGA-3 FATS

It is important to consume omega-3 fats daily. Here are some good sources you can choose from:

- **Ground linseeds (flaxseeds), chia seeds or hemp seeds:** 1–2 tbsp sprinkled over salads, yogurt alternatives, breakfast cereals, or add to bread and cake mixes
- **Linseed (flaxseed) oil or hemp oil:** do not cook with these oils, but instead add to dressings, dips, sauces, or smoothies
- **Walnuts:** half to one handful daily as a snack, on your breakfast cereals, in salads etc.
- Use standard **vegetable (rapeseed) oil** instead of sunflower or other oils when cooking and on salads
- **Algal oil/capsules:** follow instructions on pack

BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS, AND OTHER PLANT PROTEINS

Most plant sources of protein are low in saturated fat and many also provide us with unsaturated heart healthy fats, fibre and essential vitamins and minerals. **Beans, peas, and lentils** are a great protein source. Eating **at least 150g (cooked, drained weight) daily** (four tablespoons or two thirds of a can) as part of a balanced diet is a heart healthy habit. Here are some other examples of protein sources that can help to balance your meals, including suggested portion sizes:

- 100g (4 tbsp) tofu, vegan Quorn™ pieces/fillets, or soya mince – ideally plain lower salt varieties
- 30g (a handful) of peanuts (or 1 tbsp peanut butter), cashew nuts or pistachios
- 30g (2 tbsp) pumpkin seeds

Nuts, seeds, and peanut butter can also make for a good snack.

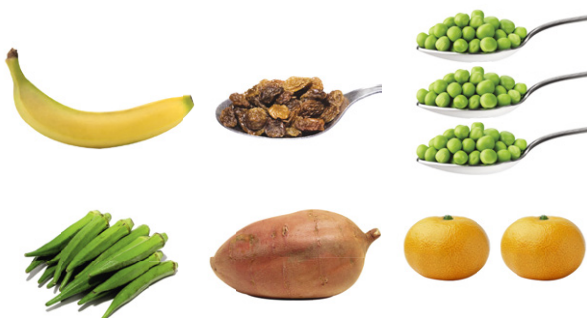
WHOLEGRAINS

Making plenty of wholegrain choices is great for your heart. As well as providing fibre, some wholegrains can contribute to our intake of protein, such as **quinoa, wild rice, popped corn, amaranth, and buckwheat.**

Other healthful options include **wholegrain breakfast cereals, muesli, brown rice, wholewheat pasta and noodles, and wholemeal bread – all varieties, e.g. sliced, chapattis, wraps, and pitta.**

AT LEAST 5-A-DAY

An adult serving is 80g (a handful or 3 tbsp of fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetables) or 30g (1 heaped tbsp) of dried fruit.



HYDRATION

TAP WATER IS THE BEST FOR HYDRATION

- Other options include tea and coffee without sugar and sugar-free soft drinks
- If you serve juice or a smoothie with a meal, do not consume more than 150ml (a small glass) daily



STEP 3: THE FOUR UCLP[®] FOODS

SOYA



Soya is a particularly valuable source of nutrition for vegans, providing high quality protein and other nutrients. Soya-based foods can help towards lowering cholesterol because they tend to be low in saturated fat, so you can use them to replace foods higher in saturated fat. Try and include at least one serving of soya foods daily and gradually build up to three daily servings. **Here are some smart swaps:**

EAT LESS...	REPLACE WITH...	SUGGESTED SERVING
Highly processed meat alternatives, e.g. sausages, burgers, and ready meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tofu seasoned with your favourite spices • Soya mince (ideally plain lower salt varieties) • Young edamame (soya) beans (from frozen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100g (4 tbsp) • 100g (4 tbsp) • 80g (3-4 tbsp)
Coconut-based drinks	Fortified plain soya alternative to milk	250ml (a large glass)
Coconut alternatives to yogurt	Fortified plain soya alternative to yogurt	125-150g
Rich biscuits, e.g. chocolate, coconut, and sandwich varieties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roasted edamame (soya) beans • Soya or Greek-style plain alternative to yogurt served with your favourite fruit and a sprinkle of seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25-30g (a handful) • 125-150g

NUTS



30g (a handful) of plain peanuts or nuts daily is a good heart healthy habit to adopt. Nuts and peanuts can help to reduce your intake of saturated fat and increase your intake of unsaturated fat, especially if they replace snacks like cakes and chocolate.

ANY UNSALTED/UNSWEETENED PEANUTS OR NUTS count, including cashews, pecans, pistachios, almonds, hazelnuts, and of course walnuts, which are also a good source of omega-3 fat.

OATS AND BARLEY



Oats and pearl barley are particularly valuable wholegrain choices because they are rich in beta-glucan – a type of fibre that can help lower cholesterol. Here is an example of how you might enjoy these foods throughout the day to help you obtain the recommended amount of beta-glucan (3g daily):

- Start your morning with **overnight oats** OR **porridge made using 30g of dry oats** OR **oat breakfast biscuits** OR a **small bowl of oat flakes**
- Include **3 oatcakes** in a snack OR add **1-2 tbsp of oat bran** to some fortified plain alternative to yogurt or a smoothie
- Add **60-75g (6 tbsp) of cooked pearl barley** to a salad, soup, or casseroles

Written in collaboration with Dietitian Heather Russell, The Vegan Society

FOODS FORTIFIED WITH PLANT STANOLS OR STEROLS

Foods fortified with plant stanols or sterols have been shown to lower cholesterol when consumed at the right daily quantity.

Vegan products fortified with plant stanols or sterols currently available:

- Small (65.5g) **bottle soya drink** (with plant stanols) – just **ONE A DAY** OR
- **Olive spread** (with plant sterols) – **three servings daily**. One serving is 10g (2 level tsp) – the amount you would usually spread on 2 slices of bread

If you decide to include these products in your UCLP[®], it is important to check the labels and ensure you: consume 1.5–3g daily – ALWAYS CONSUME WITH MEALS – eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily – do NOT exceed 3g in one day – only use if cholesterol levels are high – should not be taken by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding or children unless under medical supervision.