

VEGANISM AND PREGNANCY, IS IT SAFE?

Brooke Fryer

Vegan and vegetarian diets are on a stable rise. Many people are choosing a plant-based diet to help prevent chronic-illnesses and to help their long-term health by lowering their risk of getting diabetes, among other diseases.

During pregnancy, vegan diets are becoming quite popular with women choosing the option to stay healthy not just for themselves, but for their baby too. And professionals say, it is healthy to be a vegan whilst pregnant if it is done sensibly.

A study conducted by The Farm has shown that women are able to have a vegan diet whilst still maintaining good health and meeting the needs of you and the baby.

A plant-based diet is safe if the mum-to-be is getting the appropriate amount of protein, iron, zinc and calcium. The best way to make sure of this is to have a

weekly meal plan which can include wholegrains for zinc, soy foods, nuts and seeds for protein, pasta, tofu and leafy greens for iron and fruit juice, beans and vegetables for calcium.

Vegan Australia has said that a plant-based diet may help illnesses that could be presented with a non-plant based diet such as excess weight gain, blood sugar issues and constipation.

“The Australian Dietary Guidelines state that vegan diets are healthy and nutritionally adequate for all stages of life,” Greg from Vegan Australian says.

There are no case-studies to prove that a vegan diet does not hold all the protein, calcium, iron and other nutrients that the body needs. There has also never been a study to prove that plant-based diets are dangerous for children and pregnant women if carried out correctly, according to dietitian Robyn Chuter.

Although this kind of diet, if carried out correctly, does contain all the necessary components of a healthy diet, many women do choose to take supplements as well. Greg from Vegan Australia says that all vegans should take a B12 supplement, whether pregnant or not.

Each trimester needs a different kind a calorie intake. During the first trimester, no extra calories are needed. During the second trimester an extra 340 calories each day is crucial for a healthy pregnancy and baby. An additional 452 calories are needed per day during the third trimester whilst still eating foods that cover all the nutrients needed, yet are not excessive in calories.

Pregnancy doesn't necessarily mean having to re-consider a vegan or vegetarian-based diet, with plenty of vegan schnitzels and faux meat options, women are still able to cure their cravings without turning back on plant-based eating.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

Antonia Mangos

National Palliative Care Week is raising awareness this month, with this year's theme being *What matters most?* when it comes to the nation's end-of-life sector.

This is an annual event supported by the Department of Health to foster understanding about Australia's palliative care community. This year's event is set to address the need for Australians to plan ahead for their end-of-life care and generating greater discussion and understanding about what is available for those who are in need.

These initiatives are particularly useful for creating awareness around these social concerns and Australia's national health

standards. Along with National Palliative Care Week, other linked programs include Dying to Know Day that centres on death literacy by getting involved in end-of-life care and having conversations about the difficult subject of death. The concept of 'death literacy' is a term that came from researchers at Western Sydney University.

In relation to National Palliative Care Week, specialists from the North Shore University Health System Palliative Care Service are available at the request of attending physicians. Serious illness can pose many challenges for patients and their families including pain and other symptoms but through discussing and becoming more aware of palliative care options, this will assist the lifestyle of

individuals and their families who may be affected. This Palliative Care Service supports all patients at varying stages and works closely with the North Shore's Home and Hospice Services when appropriate.

National Palliative Care Week is running from 20-26 May 2018 with a number of events planned to create a more interactive understanding of palliative care. Such events include forums, conferences and fundraisers held in Brisbane and Canberra throughout the week. Additionally, there are other events that will take place in NSW and other states to ensure greater inclusion and understanding of these issues to in-turn warrant better death literacy.

palliativecare.org.au/national-palliative-care-week
northshore.org/palliative-care