

7 most common questions people ask you when you told them you are being Vegan!

1. But where do you get your protein?

The most common misconception out there is that you have to consume meat in order to get enough protein. This is a complete untruth. There may be a lot of protein in meat, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist anywhere else. In fact, vegans simply do what cows, pigs, sheep and chickens do; we go to the source. Green vegetables (the superstars are kale, broccoli, seaweed, peas and spinach), beans and pulses (lentils, lima, edamame, pinto, black), grains (brown rice, whole wheat bread and pasta, quinoa, bulgar) and nuts (brazils, peanuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios and walnuts) are all excellent sources of protein.

Getting enough protein in your diet is not as big a deal as this question will make you first think it is. Simply be aware of what plant based foods are protein rich, and try to include some in all your meals... The easy back-up of a peanut butter sandwich (although now you're vegan you'll discover the delights of cashew and hazelnut as well), spirulina in a smoothie, a big vat of chili with kidney, black-eyed and cannellini beans or a stirfry with tofu and lots of vegies... And that's only scratching the surface. There really is so much to choose from that often you won't even notice you're doing it!

2. Don't tofu and soya contain oestrogen and lower testosterone?

Soya has no known effect on testosterone levels in men. Soya beans contain isoflavones, which are members of a group of compounds called phytoestrogens. Because isoflavones bind to the same receptors in the body as oestrogen, a misconception has built up (about soya). The bottom line is that isoflavones are not the same as oestrogen, and do not have the same effect as oestrogen.

Furthermore, a 2010 study looked at whether soya has oestrogenic-like effects in men and lowers available testosterone levels. It concluded:

'The results ... suggest that neither soy foods nor isoflavone supplements alter measures of bioavailable testosterone concentrations in men.' – Hamilton-Reeves JM, et al.

3. Don't cows have to be milked or they'll explode?

A cow can only produce milk if she gives birth to a calf. The cows on dairy farms are impregnated every year so that they continuously supply milk. In a natural setting, cows would fall pregnant normally, calves would suckle from their mothers, and milking by humans would be completely unnecessary.

On these farms, however, the calves are taken from their mothers only a day or two after they're born. This is to maximise on the milk produced by their mothers for human consumption. Female calves are

then raised as milk producers, slaughtered immediately or possibly sold for veal production. Male calves have only two options: they are transported for veal production, where they are confined in small pens or crates, with restricted movement and no natural light and then slaughtered at six months; or they are killed straight away and sold as low grade meat.

Cows can live for up to 20 years. On dairy farms the average age of a milk producing cow is less than five years old.

4. Isn't it impossible to be vegan as animal products are in everything?

It is impossible to be perfect in this imperfect world of ours.

In fact, [The Vegan Society](#) states that being vegan is:

A way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

For the vast majority, being vegan is not a quest for personal purity, but a way of life that avoids unnecessary suffering and promotes compassion rather than cruelty.

5. Vegan food is boring. What do you eat?

This is a myth that most vegans are very happy to challenge. Vegans love sharing exciting food ideas and you'll find a real sense of community between food bloggers, chefs and cooks online. Initially creating food you've never made before might seem daunting, but you will be amazed how quickly you discover new flavours, techniques and ideas. You'll find that most cuisines already have a range of vegan dishes, and many options can be easily made vegan with a few changes. Did you know that there's also a heap of very familiar food that just happens to be vegan? Have a look at our [Product Directory](#) for a full list.

6. But I love sports. Won't being vegan make me weak?

This myth's foundations probably lie in 'But where do you get your protein?', so in answering that we have already gone some way to debunking this. What you may not be aware of, however, is just how many great and successful athletes are vegan. If sport is your thing then it is probably worth familiarising with the 'who's who' of the vegan sporting world. Within the [Vegan People](#) section you'll find individual case studies for sprinters, ultramarathon runners, boxers, racing car drivers and everyone in between. You may not be familiar with the name, but [Scott Jurek](#) is recognised as probably the greatest ultrarunner (distances of 50, 100 and more miles) of all time. He has been a vegan since 1999 and has won most of the toughest long distance races in the world, and many of these on numerous occasions. You're more

likely to have heard of Carl Lewis but did you know that he's vegan? One of the world's greatest athletes, Carl attributes his dominant and record breaking performances of 1991 to being vegan.

7. Don't we need to drink milk for strong bones?

No.

This has been a much repeated marketing line of the dairy industry. It is perfectly possible to obtain sufficient calcium (and vitamin D) while being vegan.