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Vegetarianism

The time that we are now living in has been termed by many as the information age. This title has been given to the current era because people can retrieve, send, and process knowledge faster and more efficiently than ever before. From our new period has come technological advancements which have both caused and been an effect of the growing pool of information available to the world. Communities more fully understand and are changing the way they affect the environment of their areas and the rest of the planet. The science of the human body has expanded and become increasingly important to many people. Along with advancements in learning, there has come a greater desire to put them into use in our daily activities. Vegetarianism is expanding in the general public as a result of the new knowledge available to them. But what does one need to know about eliminating meat from their diet. The three most important things to know about vegetarianism are what exactly it is, why one would choose to become vegetarian, and how to change your diet to become a healthy vegetarian.

The first thing to know about vegetarianism is what exactly it is. There are three types of real vegetarians, but many other people have reduced their intake of meat or given up eating red meat. To truly be vegetarian one must not eat any flesh, although some people eat no meat except for fish and consider themselves vegetarian. The first type of vegetarian is a lacto-ovo-vegetarian. They eat both dairy products and eggs, but do not consume meat. It is fairly easy to get enough nutrients with a lacto-ovo diet. The second style of vegetarianism is a lacto-vegetarian who eats dairy but no meat or eggs. Very few people choose to be a lacto-vegetarian because most people think that eating eggs is very similar to eating dairy products in the way that each is produced. The third and strictest form of being vegetarian is vegan. A vegan avoids all foods that come from animals in any way, including both dairy and eggs. Many vegans also try not to use animal products in other ways such as wearing leather or furs because of their belief in animal rights. In summary, to be a true vegetarian one must avoid all meats and possibly dairy and eggs.

The second thing one should learn is why a person would decide to eliminate meats and possibly other animal products from their diet. There are many benefits to one's personal health involved in abstaining from meat. For example, a vegetarian has a twenty eight percent less chance of developing heart disease and a thirty nine percent less chance of acquiring cancer. Tiana Celesia, a registered dietitian at Brigham, said "Studies show that if you cut meat consumption by one hundred percent, you reduce your risk of heart attack by ninety percent". This quote clearly states that many people would live longer lives by consuming less meat since the largest cause of death in the United States is heart disease. The average vegetarian consumes less saturated fat and cholesterol than an average meat eater, so the general health of a vegetarian is very likely to be better than that of a non vegetarian. Another reason one would choose to become vegetarian is to help the surrounding environment. Reducing or eliminating meat from one's diet helps the environment by using less land and water for the development of food. Fifty percent of the land in our country is used for agriculture, and eighty percent of that land is used for either grazing of livestock or growing feed for the animals. Fifty percent of the water consumed in the United States is consumed by livestock. Another example of how people could use less water by being vegetarian is shown in the fact that a vegan uses only three hundred gallons of water a day for the production of their food while a meat eater uses four thousand two hundred gallons of water in one day. Many people have chosen to eliminate eating meat because they feel like the data shown above demonstrates how being vegetarian is an environmentally sound choice. A third reason why people don't eat meat is because they feel that each animal has a right to live and should not be

killed for one's intake. Religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism either require or strongly recommend a vegetarian diet because of the belief that they have been or could become an animal through reincarnation. Yet another reason why some choose to abstain from meat is that they feel humans are biologically herbivorous beings. They feel that we are not supposed to eat meat because of differences in human and carnivorous animals bodies. Some examples of these differences are that we have pores on our skin, well developed salivary glands, alkaline saliva, and stomach acid twenty times weaker than that of a meat eating animal while meat eaters have no pores on their skin, very small salivary glands, acidic saliva, and a strong hydrochloric acid in their stomachs. To summarize, one might choose to be vegetarian because of health, environmental, moral, and biological reasons.

Finally, people should know how to properly change one's diet to eliminate meat and maintain or produce a healthy body. Mr. John Vandereen, the director of the food and drug administration's office of plants and dairy, said "The more you restrict your diet, the more difficult it is to get the nutrients you need". This means that while becoming vegetarian, one must be careful to create a nutrient rich diet. One of the first problems met by the potential vegetarian is how to get enough protein. This problem can be easily taken care of by consuming items rich in protein such as legumes (beans), nuts, seeds, tofu, peanut butter, and in some cases dairy products and eggs. It is important to get a variety of proteins since the only complete protein that is not from an animal is soybeans. By combining many sources of protein all the essential amino acids that the body needs will be consumed. The second problem one may find in becoming a vegetarian is getting the proper amounts of all vitamins and minerals. The answer to this problem also lies in eating a variety of foods, including many fruits and vegetables. In a vegan diet, protein and vitamin supplements may need to be taken in order to maintain proper health. The numbers of servings of each type of food for a vegetarian has not been agreed upon by nutritionists, but most dieticians recommend basing one's diet on grains high in fiber, having about two or three proteins, four or more servings of vegetables, between two and four fruits, and between zero and two servings of low fat dairy products. As shown above, there are vitally important nutritional issues to address when becoming vegetarian.

In Conclusion, three significant topics about vegetarianism are understanding the definition and types of vegetarians, knowing the causes of people becoming vegetarian, and realizing how to eliminate meat from one's diet in a safe and wholesome way. Today, more and more people are choosing to become vegetarians, and these people are changing society for everyone. Restaurants are carrying more meatless dishes, airlines offer vegetarian meals, and the basic consciousness of what is eaten is growing as a result of the increasing number of vegetarians and others reducing their intake of meat for health reasons. The increase in number of vegetarians is directly linked to society's expansion of information and the spread of it. As technologies and other advancements take place in the "information age" health and environmental consciousness will also grow, and an increase in vegetarians will be soon to follow. I encourage you to at least cut down your consumption of meat in order to help your personal health, the environment, and also take part in the growth and spread of knowledge across the world.

