



Taking a Closer Look at
Teenage Vegetarians...

Compiled By Rebecca

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How Can I Tell My Parents That I Have Decided To Become a Vegetarian or Vegan...?

After doing the research and putting in lots of thought, you've decided to become a vegetarian or vegan. The next step is to tell your parents about your choice. You're nervous about how they might react – otherwise you wouldn't be reading this. So how do you tell your parents about your decision to go veg in the best possible way?



First, you have to know why you are becoming a vegetarian or vegan. If your reasons don't go any deeper than "because my best friend is doing it," your parents probably won't take you very seriously. You need concrete, well thought-out reasons if you expect to be treated like a person capable of making decisions like this.

So take a moment to put into words your reasons for becoming vegan or vegetarian. Is it because you object to animal cruelty? Because it's a healthier lifestyle and diet? Because you feel opposed to it for religious, spiritual or ethical reasons? **When you approach your parents, be prepared to lay these reasons out in a calm, methodical fashion.** If they are shocked or angry at first, don't react with a hot temper. You've had a lot of time to think about your decision, but remember that this is the first they've heard of it. They may need time to process the idea, then

you can talk about it later once they've had time to get used to the thought of having a vegan or vegetarian son or daughter.

It's also important that you don't make your parents feel that you are criticizing them or their lifestyle or judging them for eating meat and using animal products. This decision is yours alone and has nothing to do with how you feel about them. Show them that you respect their right to make decisions for themselves, just as you want them to respect your right to do the same for yourself.

Another important thing you need to realize is that becoming a vegetarian or vegan is a big lifestyle change. In our culture meat is a big part of the way we eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. To suddenly get rid of meat from your diet requires a radical shift in the way you eat and live. If you can show your parents that you've thought about this and realize the commitment you're making, they're more likely to respect it.

Be prepared to discuss the mechanics of how your newfound lifestyle is going to fit into the family. How will you do family meals together? Perhaps you could request that your portion of dinner be prepared without the meat, or maybe you could even offer to find and cook vegan or vegetarian dinner recipes for your family once or twice a week.

Parents are always more likely to listen and lend support when you approach them like a rational adult instead of a whiny kid. Stay calm and logical, offering your reasons and giving evidence that you've really thought this decision through. They'll be more likely to accept your choice to become vegetarian or vegan.

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How Do You Become Vegan When Your Parents Won't Let You...?

You've thought about it a lot, weighed the pros and cons, then announced your decision to your family: you want to become a vegan. You may have expected them to be supportive, or perhaps you suspected that they wouldn't like it – but whatever the case, they said, "Not under my roof." So how is a kid supposed to eat like a vegan when their parents won't let them?

The first thing to do is find out where they are coming from and why they are so resistance to the idea of you becoming a vegan. Is it because they think

you won't get the proper nutrition without meat? Are they worried about the cost of cooking vegan food at home? Are they afraid of the difficulty of learning new vegan recipes? Are they just afraid because it's different? They may be saying no just because they think it's a phase you'll soon grow out of, and you can't really be serious about wanting to be vegan.



Whatever your parents' concerns, investigate them and then do some research for them. **Gather facts and information that answer their concerns.** If they're worried about your nutrition, find statements from a credible health website that explains how to be a healthy vegetarian. If they're worried about the cost, do some online price comparisons of vegan substitutes for eggs and cheese to show them. Once your parents see that you go the extra mile, they may change their minds and let you become vegan after all.

But sometimes, even that won't work. They may be stuck in their ways and just don't want to let a change like becoming vegan happen under their roof. In that case, is there anything you can do?

One thing you can do is to take it upon yourself to do some of your own cooking and meal prep. Your parents may just be saying no because they don't want to cook differently, but if you're willing to do it on your own then they might become okay with it.

Your parents may not want to buy soy milk and vegan substitution products like cheese and eggs, but they can't tell you how to spend your own money. If you're serious about becoming a vegan and your parents

won't support you, buy your own foods that will help you follow your new diet.

Finally, accept that you may just have to compromise with your parents for now. Maybe you could agree to try vegetarianism, which is less extreme because you can still eat eggs, cheese, and milk. Once you leave home and are on your own you can switch to a strictly vegan diet. It's tough to become vegan when your parents won't allow it, but be patient with them and try to make the best of the situation.

One final note: pay attention to your nutrition. If you are just refusing to eat the non-vegan food your parents feed you but you aren't replacing the missed nutrients with something else, your body will become malnourished! Pay attention to your body and become educated about your nutritional needs.



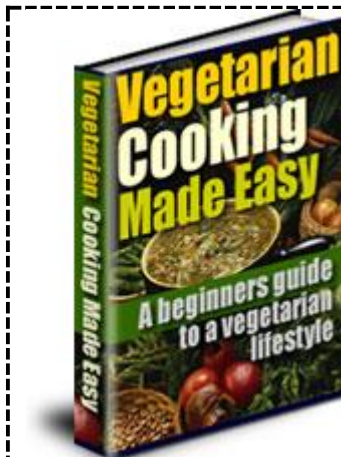
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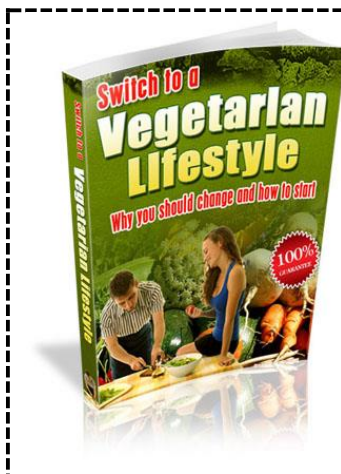
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