**VEGETARIAN DIET**

The vegetarian diet has gained widespread popularity in recent years. Some studies estimate that vegetarians account for up to 18% of the global population.

Apart from the ethical and environmental benefits of cutting meat from your diet, a well-planned vegetarian diet may also reduce your risk of chronic disease, support weight loss and improve the quality of your diet.

**SHOULD YOU BECOME A VEGETARIAN?**

People choose a vegetarian diet for many reasons. For some people, eating vegetarian is a way to be healthier or to avoid hormones used in animal foods. For others, eating this way has more to do with religion, animal rights, or environmental concerns.

If you’re considering a vegetarian diet, you’ll want to consider what type of vegetarian you’ll be. Once you’ve decided which foods you’ll avoid, you’ll also want to come up with a plan to ensure that you’re able to get all the nutrients your body needs.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Most vegetarians avoid meat, poultry, and fish, though some also restrict eggs, dairy, and other animal products.

A balanced vegetarian diet with nutritious foods like produce, grains, healthy fats, and plant-based protein may offer several benefits, but it may increase your risk of nutritional deficiencies if poorly planned.

Be sure to pay close attention to a few key nutrients and round out your diet with a variety of healthy whole foods. That way, you’ll enjoy the benefits of vegetarianism while minimizing the side effects.