

# CHANGE YOUR FOOD, CHANGE THE WORLD?

Could you ever **give up** animal products entirely? You probably think it would be easy. You just have to stop eating meat, right? Well, not exactly. Honey comes from animals, so should you stop eating that? And let's think about beauty and clothes, would you check all your soap and shampoo for animal products and would you stop wearing wool? Veganism—avoiding all animal products—is a movement that has been growing in popularity for the last ten years. One survey estimates that there are now around 20 million vegans in the U.S. Social media is full of vegan tips and recipes, and vegan diets are trending among celebrities. So, is veganism just a temporary **fad**, or are there good reasons to change your diet?

## This is what people who have chosen a vegan lifestyle say

- 1** It's healthy. Some studies show that people on a vegan diet have lower risk of **heart disease** and diabetes than people who eat animal products.
- 2** It's economical. Vegan ingredients are often quite cheap—although you'll probably have to learn to cook! You won't find much vegan fast food.
- 3** The meat industry has been contributing to global warming for years. It is one of the world's biggest polluters and produces a significant part of all the Earth's greenhouse gases. Cows, in particular, are bad for the environment and contribute around 10 to 15 percent of methane gases. Methane is one of the worst gases for causing global warming.
- 4** All over the world, billions of square kilometers of land are used for **cattle**, or to grow food for farm animals. That land could be a green space again, or it could be used to grow food for people living in poverty instead. And in South America, meat production has caused a lot of deforestation.

## The reasons why vegetarianism isn't enough for some people ...

- 5** The milk industry and the egg industry use some **cruel** methods. Cows only produce milk when they have had a calf. Their calves are taken away from them in less than 24 hours and are often sold for meat. The mother cows are then **milked** artificially. In the egg industry, male chicks are often killed when they are born.
- 6** Millions of animals, especially pigs and chickens, are raised in "factory farms," where they are kept indoors, usually in very crowded spaces and with a very poor quality of life. People have been protesting about these animals' rights for years, but it seems that the only way that factory farming will end is if everyone stops eating meat.
- 7** For some people, it's a moral decision. They simply don't believe that humans have the right to kill animals or take their products when animal products aren't necessary for our survival.

## So, is veganism a way to save the planet?

Some people think that any type of farming—even farming plants—causes some damage to the environment. So, will we make a big difference to the world if we change to a plant-based diet? Or will we just be following the latest trend?



### Fun fact

Some people find the vegan diet quite extreme, but there is a type of veganism—frutitarianism—whose followers only eat nuts, seeds, and fruit. Some only eat fruit that falls on the ground because they believe it is wrong to take it from plants and trees.





## Step 1

- 1 Do you know any vegetarians or vegans? What is the definition of a vegan diet?
- when you don't eat any meat
  - when you don't eat any meat or fish
  - when you don't eat or use animal products

- 2 Match the definitions with the words in the box.

honey wool pig cow calf chick

- a baby cow
- a baby chicken
- animal that beef comes from
- animal that pork and sausage come from
- hair from sheep used in clothing
- sweet substance made by bees

## Step 2

- 3 Check (✓) the issues that a vegan diet can help with, according to the text.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> pollution          | <input type="checkbox"/> animal cruelty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> transportation     | <input type="checkbox"/> global warming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> endangered species | <input type="checkbox"/> poverty        |

- 4 Choose the correct alternatives, according to the text.


- The article says that the number of vegans has been **increasing** / decreasing.
- People on a vegan diet often feel **well** / weak.
- Veganism **has** / **hasn't** existed for a long time.
- The meat industry causes a lot of **pollution** / waste.
- Some people think that too much land is used for feeding **animals** / people.
- In the milk and egg industry, young animals are killed because they are **too small** / not necessary.
- Cows don't produce milk **if** / **unless** they have babies.
- Some farm animals live in **factories** / bad conditions.

- 5 Find the **highlighted** words in the text and match them with the definitions.

- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 give up <input type="text"/>       | 4 cattle <input type="text"/> |
| 2 fad <input type="text"/>           | 5 cruel <input type="text"/>  |
| 3 heart disease <input type="text"/> | 6 milked <input type="text"/> |

- cows and bulls that are kept as farm animals for their milk or meat
- causing pain or suffering
- something that people are interested in for only a short period of time
- an illness often caused by lifestyle
- to take milk from a cow, goat, etc.
- to stop doing or having something

- 6 **Think critically!** Look at these arguments **AGAINST** having a vegan diet. Do you think they are good reasons? Give each argument a score out of 5.



### Arguments against VEGANISM

- It's hard to find vegan food in stores.
- The meat industry provides people with a lot of jobs, so we need to preserve it.
- Growing and processing plants causes environmental problems too, unless you grow all your own food.
- There's a protein, B12, that our bodies need and that you can only find in animal products.
- If we don't kill animals, there will be too many of them for the planet.
- Animals don't have feelings and we are more intelligent than they are.
- Animal products contain essential nutrients that help our bodies to grow and stay healthy.

- 7 **Pairwork** Think of some more reasons why people would or would not choose a vegan diet. Then say whether or not you would want to be vegan and why.

## Step 3

- 8 Choose one of these statements that you either agree or disagree strongly with.

- Veganism is bad for your health.
- People should stop using cars.
- People should stop using plastic.
- Recycling is a waste of time.
- There isn't much that ordinary people can do to reduce global warming.

Write a paragraph for an opinion section of a magazine. Explain how you feel about the topic and give reasons for your point of view. Write 125–150 words.