



Guide for Vegan Prisoners

2009

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Introduction

This aim of this booklet is to **provide vegan prisoners with practical information** which they can use to help ensure that they receive vegan food, herbal remedies (if required), toiletries and shoes.

There are various systems in place to provide equal opportunities to vegan prisoners, but these can sometimes be difficult to navigate without the relevant information.

DEFINITION OF A VEGAN

VEGANISM may be defined as a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

In dietary terms it refers to the practice of dispensing with all animal produce — including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, animal milks, honey, and their derivatives.

In terms of clothing, the wearing of such items as leather, suede etc would not be acceptable to vegans.

Intensive farming can be very cruel and this is probably the single most common reason for the adoption of veganism. However, many people choose a vegan lifestyle for a number of reasons such as concern for the environment, for health and for moral beliefs.

Please keep this booklet safe during your prison sentence so that you can refer back to it.

Prison Service Guidelines on the Care of Vegans

Chapter One - Appendix Three PRACTICE OF VEGANISM IN PRISON

Basic Beliefs

1.1 Veganism is not a religion but a philosophy whereby the use of an animal for food, clothing or any other purpose is regarded as wholly unacceptable.

1.2 The majority of Vegans reject entirely anything which has its origins in the exploitation, suffering or death of any creature. An individual may lead a Vegan lifestyle for one particular reason or for a combination of reasons, and this may result in some Vegans being stricter than others in what they deem as acceptable and unacceptable. Vegan beliefs are followed by individuals within various faiths, to varying degrees, and by individuals of no faith.

1.3 Most Vegans will not involve themselves directly, or indirectly, in anything whereby their lifestyle and beliefs are compromised or violated, either for themselves or for others. Throughout their lives, Vegans will seek to sever all links with, and dependencies upon, the use or abuse of animals.

Diet

2.1 A Vegan diet is based on fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans,

pulses and cereals. The diet omits all animal products including meat, poultry, fish, sea creatures, invertebrates, eggs, animal milks, honey and royal jelly. Vegans should not be required to handle such foodstuffs. Food/drink containing or made with any of the above or their derivatives should not be served. The Vegan Society can provide helpful information on a range of issues including how nutrients are obtained from a Vegan diet.

2.2 Human nutrient requirements, with the exception of B12 can be met by a diet composed entirely of plant foods, but to do so it must be carefully planned using a wide selection of foods. Fortified Yeast extract is a good source of some of the B-vitamins, including vitamin B12 as is fortified Soya milk.

Purchase of supplements and remedies

3.1 Herbal remedies, dietary, or food supplements of a vegetable or synthetic origin such as Iodine (Kelp tablets) may be requested through the prison shop.

Dress

4.1 Clothing and footwear must be from non-animal (eg plant or synthetic) sources. The wearing of all animal fibres, skins and materials including wool, silk, leather and suede will not be accepted by Vegan prisoners.

Prison Service Guidelines on the Care of Vegans

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Toiletries

5.1 Toiletries containing any animal derived ingredients and toiletries where either the product or its ingredients have been tested on animals are totally unacceptable and are not permitted. Therefore, whenever toiletries suitable for Vegans are required, establishments should make arrangements for such items to be stocked in the prison canteen or ordered in as necessary.

5.2 Vegans should not be expected to use inappropriate toiletries.

5.3 Vegans should not be asked to handle or use substances that have involved animal testing on the product or its ingredients.

Work

6.1 Most Vegan prisoners will not wish to be involved in any way in the care of animals on prison farms. Vegans usually choose not to engage in any sport, hobby, or trade that directly or indirectly, causes stress, distress, suffering, or death to any creature.

6.2 Vegans should not be expected to work in butchery or handle anything of animal origin or content.

Further Reading

'Why Vegan?' by Kathy Clements: published by GMP.

'The Vegan Health Plan' by Amanda Sweet: published by Arlington Books.

'Compassion - The Ultimate Ethic (An Exploration of Veganism)' by Victoria Moran: published by The American Vegan Society.

Being Vegan by Joanne Stepaniak Published by Lowell House, a division of NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group Inc., USA

Plant Based Nutrition and Health by Stephen Walsh PhD published by The Vegan Society

Resources – Agencies - Veganism

For further information about Veganism, establishments may wish to contact:

The Vegan Society
21, Hylton Street
Hockley
Birmingham
B18 6HJ
Tel: 0845 458 8244

Vegan Prisoner Support Group
PO Box 194
Enfield
Middlesex
EN1 4YL

Food and Nutrition

The Vegan Prisoners Support Group worked closely with a nutritionist, The Vegan Society's Nutritional Advisor and the Head of Prison Catering Alan Tuckwood to provide the following recommendations which are listed in the Catering Information Pack which is in place in all prison kitchens. The aim of these guidelines is to help ensure equal opportunities for vegans.

If you are concerned about your health you should see a qualified health professional.

Food Provided (recommendations)

Nuts

1-2oz of mixed nuts should be issued per day in order to help provide selenium and omega 3 in the vegan prison diet. It is also recommended that these should not be exclusively peanuts because peanuts are not a nut but a legume and do not contain omega 3.

These nuts may be incorporated into the meals or provided separately.

Soya milk

In order to ensure sufficient calcium and vitamin B12 in the vegan prison diet, 3½ litres of **fortified** soya milk should be issued per week.

The main brand of soya milk currently used in prisons, sweetened and fortified Alpro, contains the following per 500ml:

- 2.5 mcg vitamin D2
- 2.5 mcg vitamin B12

- 16.5g protein
- 600 mg calcium

Fruit and Vegetables – at least five portions a day

Two to three pieces of fruit can form part of the 5-a-day, but if only two are provided then the other three portions should be provided by vegetables. This includes vegetables which have been incorporated into dishes, as well as side portions.

The following give examples of one portion:

Banana - 1 medium-sized;
Broccoli - 2 florets;
Cabbage green/red, cooked - 1 mugful;
Cabbage green/red, raw, sliced - 2 handfuls;
Carrots - 3 heaped tablespoons;
Cauliflower - 8 florets;
Peas - 3 tablespoons;
Spring greens cooked - 1 mugful;
Sweetcorn - 1 cob;
Tomatoes - 1 medium.

Three heaped tablespoons of chickpeas, kidney beans or lentils can also be counted as no more than one portion per day.

Potatoes do not count since they are a starchy food.

It is recommended that everyone should eat a wide variety of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables as they tend to have more nutritional benefits.

Nutritional Requirements For a Vegan Diet

Food Group	Daily amount ¹	What It Provides	Suggestions
Vegetables	2+, 100g [4 oz]	vitamins, minerals, protein, fibre, antioxidants	broccoli, kale, spring greens, cabbage, spinach, carrots, peppers, tomatoes, pumpkin
Fruit	3+, large pieces ²	vitamins, minerals, fibre, vitamin C to help absorb iron	include some citrus fruit
Nuts	1-2, 25 g [1 oz]	protein, oils, minerals, fibre	almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts, nut butters
Oils	as required for cooking	energy, oils	unhydrogenated rapeseed oil
Wholegrains and root vegetables	2+, 100g [4oz]	energy, protein, vitamins, fibre	pasta, oats, bread, rice, corn, millet, buckwheat, barley, bulgur wheat, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam, parsnips
Pulses	1+, 100g [4 oz]	energy, protein, minerals, fibre	peas, lentils, chickpeas, baked beans, kidney beans, soya products

As a general guide food from the above groups should be eaten every day to provide a solid foundation for a vegan diet. Increased servings may be needed according to energy requirements. Any margarine used should be non-hydrogenated. Rapeseed oil is preferred to sunflower, safflower, soy or sesame oil as it provides a better balance of types of fat, including omega-3 fats.

Key Nutrient	Daily amount ¹	Suggestions
Calcium	700 - 1200 mg	An adequate intake of calcium can be assured by 3½ litres per week of fortified soya milk [containing at least 120mg/ 100ml] or an equivalent amount of other calcium rich foods: tofu prepared with calcium sulphate (see labels for calcium content); green leafy vegetables, such as kale or spring greens (about 150 mg per 100g), or a vegan calcium supplement. Note that calcium from spinach is poorly absorbed.
Vitamin B ¹²	3 micrograms+	Fortified foods or supplements. E.g., 25g per week of a yeast extract fortified with 50 micrograms of B ¹² per 100g OR 600 ml per day of soya milk fortified with 0.5 micrograms B ¹² per 100 ml OR a daily B ¹² tablet containing at least 3 micrograms B ¹² .
Iodine	150 to 500 micrograms	Iodine is important for good metabolism and thyroid function. Ideal intakes for adults lie between 150 and 500 micrograms a day. While this can be achieved by careful use of seaweed it may be more convenient and reliable to use a supplement

Stephen Walsh PhD., Chair of the Vegan Society and Spokesperson on Diet and Health.
Updated March 2006

¹ Daily amounts are given as number of servings followed by serving size, for cooked foods serving sizes are given as cooked weights.

² Each piece of fruit should be around 100g, e.g. one orange, banana or apple. For smaller fruits a serving should be sufficient pieces to make up 100g, e.g. 2 nectarine oranges or about thirty grapes.

Pulses – one portion per day

A portion of pulses should weigh 4oz (125g) when cooked. Examples of pulses are peas, lentils, chickpeas, butter beans, kidney beans and baked beans. Soya beans may come in the form of tofu or processed soya products such as soya sausages and tvp. We recommend that soya products are not solely relied upon and that TVP/soya protein is not used more than 3-4 times per week.

Important Note: Vegan Supplements

The general prison population receives 200ml milk per day so the extra 300mls that strict vegan prisoners should receive is a *supplement*. If the nuts are provided separately they are also a *supplement*. In order to receive these you must practice a strict vegan diet where you neither consume or purchase non-vegan food.

Prisoners on vegan extras are often monitored to ensure that they are a strict vegan. For example:

1. If another prisoner sees you refusing a non-vegan dessert they may put pressure on you to accept it and give it to them. If you do so you put yourself at risk of losing any vegan supplements that you are provided with;
2. If you purchase a non-vegan product from the prison shop - even if you purchase it for someone else - you may lose your vegan supplements.

Nutrients

Protein

On average a male adult requires 55g protein per day and a female adult requires 45g. Protein is not usually a

cause for concern, but is worth flagging up, as many people enquire about it.

A diet high in oil, sugar or fruit can easily have too little protein. If no oils or sugars are eaten then many plant foods, including potatoes and oats, provide sufficient protein per calorie by themselves. If a large part of the diet is low protein foods then including beans, peas or lentils is necessary to meet protein needs.

A varied diet based on other plant foods including some peas, beans or lentils will meet protein needs without any special attention.

Combining grains with beans in individual meals is not necessary, but including some peas, beans or lentils most days is a good idea as they are both rich in protein and high in the amino acid lysine which is low in many grains, nuts and seeds.

Calcium

The recommended daily amount is provided by the soya milk mentioned earlier. Calcium is also found in spring greens, cabbage, broccoli, white flour (as calcium is added by law) and white flour products, bread, oranges and chickpeas.

Vitamin D

The average adult requires 5mcg/daily, some of which is provided by the fortified soya milk mentioned on the previous page. Vitamin D also comes from sun exposure. Expose your face and arms to the sun for approximately 15 minutes per day.

If your sun exposure is limited (for example in a British winter) or if you are dark-skinned make sure that you consume 10 to 20 micrograms of vitamin D2 each day from fortified food (soya milk or vegan margarine) or a supplement.

Vitamin B12

The recommended daily amount is provided by the soya milk. It is also provided by fortified yeast extract, fortified margarine and fortified cereals.

Iodine

The average adult requires 150-300mg/ daily. While ideal intakes of iodine can be achieved by careful use of seaweed. However, our research shows that it is impracticable in the prison kitchen and unpalatable to most. Thus it may be more convenient and reliable to purchase a kelp supplement through the prison shop.

Regarding iodine, the prison guidelines state:

- 3.1 Herbal remedies, dietary, or food supplements of a vegetable or synthetic origin such as Iodine (Kelp tablets) may be requested through the prison shop.

Prison shops currently list a suitable vegan supplement in the form of iodine tablets by Allsports on their main listing. If this is not on the local listing, you can request that it is added. Failing that The Vegan Society produce a multi-vitamin (VEG1) which contains iodine and is available to prisons and prisoners at cost price of £3 plus p&p for a 90 day supply. This is usually arranged through prisoners monies via a cash disbursement.

Keeping a Record of Your Diet

It is advisable that you keep a record of your diet for the first few weeks following your arrival at a prison. You can then check these to see that the following recommendations have been adhered to:

- 1-2oz (25-50g) mixed nuts per day either in your meals or separately
- 500ml **fortified** soya milk
- at least 5 portions a day of fruit and vegetables
- 1 portion of pulses per day
(see page 2 for more details)

Please contact the Vegan Society or VPSG who can provide diet record sheets for this purpose.

If individual prisoners feel they require extra vitamins these should be requested through Healthcare. The following prescribable vitamins may be stocked by them and are suitable for vegans (confirmed 11.08): Ketovite tablets - vitamin B complex, C, E and K along with folic acid; Ketovite liquid – A, D and B12. The liquid and tablet form can be taken together or separately (both are vegan). If this avenue is not feasible, vitamins should be ordered through the Canteen for your purchase (See note in Prison Service Guidelines) or VPSG may be able to send you in VEG1.

The Prison Kitchen

Comprehensive recommendations regarding the storage and handling of vegan food have been agreed by VPSG and HMPS Catering Department.

These have been installed in the PSO5000 as a prison guideline. Copies of the PSO5000 are available from The Vegan Society or VPSG free on request.

However, we are including some guidelines below for your guidance:

- Vegan food should not be cross contaminated with any form of animal protein at any stage of the storage/handling or serving.
- Uncontaminated oil should be used to cook the vegan choice, which includes items such as roast potatoes and chips.
- It is important that a fortified brand soya milk is provided to ensure adequate supplies of calcium are received. The average adult requires 700mg/day.

Food in Court

You may have to attend court whilst in prison. You will be held in a cell at the court and the question of food may arise.

Our information is that some People Escort Courier Services (PECS) do not have any vegan pre-packaged food available.

You are entitled to be fed and can insist that they provide you with suitable food. If you are experiencing problems your solicitor may be able to help you.

Toiletries

In 2004, the VPSG recommended that the basic prison issue toiletries should be suitable for vegans and not tested

on animals. We can confirm that the following items are suitable:

- Hair & Body Wash 100ml and 250ml code 513032
- Shave Gel code 513033
- Sejems Freshmint Toothpaste code 513023
- Low Lather Detergent code 513049

If the prison you arrive at does not stock them we recommend you make an application to the Governor and inform him that the above are available for their purchase through the Greenham Contract.

Other vegan items may be stocked:

- The Collection - Hotel Complimentaries - Liquid Soap
- Pampered Blue Ice Roll on - Chillwoods Deodorant
- Freshmint Toothpaste - Jordans Personal Care

Note: Currently no bar soap is suitable for vegans.

If the prisoner wishes, they can request an order from Honesty (Honesty Cosmetics, Lumford Mill, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1GS Tel: 01629 814888) through prisoners monies with a cash disbursement. If difficulties are experienced we recommend a General Application to the relevant department in your prison. Ask your spur officer who to address it to.

Note. We are informed that Honesty may soon be appearing on the new DHL/Booker canteen sheets.

Footwear

There is currently no access to vegan footwear; however Greenham Trading do have non-leather shoes in stock. They deal with many prisons so could be a possible source of shoes. Enquire with your Personal Officer or Residential Governor.

Alternatively, both The Vegan Society and Vegan Prisoners Support Group are recommending that Ethical Wares be added to the draft instruction as they have available a large range of vegan shoes and boots. Many prisons have found this to be a favourable solution. Their contact details are:
Ethical Wares, Caegwyn, Temple Bar, Felinfach, Ceredigion, SA48 7SA, Wales, SA8 7SA, 01570 471155

You may also be able to order from the following companies: this is usually arranged through prisoners monies via a cash disbursement.

- Vegetarian Shoes, 12 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UP, 01273 685685
- Alternative Stores, Hartley Court, Brunswick Industrial Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE13 7BA, 0191 236 1043

Canteen/Prison Shop

Canteen sheets are issued on a weekly basis in order for prisoners to order food items/toiletries. The amount you are allowed to spend will vary from prison to prison.

Prisoners' shops/canteens should make every effort to stock food, toiletries and

other items for which there is a demand from ethnic minority prisoners. In general, all items for prisoners should be purchased through the prison shop. Where prisoners request items which are not stocked, prison shops can order them through a supplier.

Vegan products, especially food items and toiletries, should also be available either as a stock item or by arranging for goods to be ordered for prisoners.

If difficulty is experienced we recommend a meeting with your prison shop for sight of the full listing and to discuss the inclusion of vegan items on your local listing.

Update February 2009: The VPSG and Vegan Society continue to have regular meetings with HMPS Procurement in order to ensure equal opportunities are provided in Prison Shops.

Resolving Grievances

If you have a grievance there are various ways of trying to resolve the issue, as outlined below.

Take Steps to Stop Grievances Occurring

It is recommended that you consider trying to build a working relationship with your Personal Officer, the S.O (Senior Officer), P.O (Principle Officer) and kitchen staff if possible. This can make it easier to address issues arising before they reach the stage where you need to put in a complaint.

Details of the Grievance/Complaint

Keep an accurate note of any applications, discussions and commitments in a diary so that if you decide to put in a complaint and/or seek help through outside organisations, you have a history of the situation.

Write down notes straight after any relevant event occurs so that it is fresh in your mind. Note times and dates, who was involved, where the issue of complaint occurred and as much detail as possible about the error/complaint.

Internal resolution

First try and resolve the problem by speaking to a relevant member of staff, e.g. Wing Officer or Catering Manager. If you are speaking to an officer who is not usually on the wing you may wish to request a meeting.

If this is not successful approach your Personal Officer or Residential Governor. They are in effect the first step in any process of complaint or request you may wish to make. Your Personal Officer will also be the one to monitor your progress through your sentence and complete paperwork concerning such things as Home Detention Curfew (HDC).

Request/Complaints Forms

These forms are to be completed when other channels of complaint have failed. These (if not readily available) should be issued to you within 7 days of applying and a reply should be received within 3 days of completion.

Once your reply is received if you are not happy with the response the next step is to fill in an appeal to your complaint, and then appeal to the Governor.

If you try to resolve the problem internally first with a written complaint, you are more likely to be eligible for legal aid in the event that you need to take the complaint further. Normally at this stage, however, it will be settled amicably.

External resolution

The next step is to put in a written complaint with the Ombudsman. This must be done within one month of receiving your final response. You can also request that the Prison Ombudsman investigate your complaint if the Prison Service does not reply to you within the 6 week maximum deadline.

The problem should be put in writing: if you require assistance you can speak in confidence to the Independent Monitoring Board. You can also make an application to see the Board of Visitors who may be able to assist.

The following group also gives advice: The Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS) provides legal advice and information to prisoners in England and Wales regarding their rights, the application of the Prison Rules and conditions of imprisonment.

PAS take up prisoners' complaints about their treatment inside prison by providing free advice and assistance on an individual and confidential basis. They take legal action where appropriate and have solicitors on-hand to advise.

Prisoners' Advice Service, PO Box 46199, London, EC1M 4XA, tel 020 7253 3323, tel 0845 430 8923

Using the VPSG/Vegan Society

Guidelines

Although vegan prisoners are free to contact the VPSG or Vegan Society for help and advice, prisoners should be aware that time taken up with individual matters means that these organisations run less efficiently in their efforts to forward the overall care of vegans detained in prison. It is suggested that each prisoner should use the establishments' channels of complaint before calling on outside help.

If you have a genuine problem you are unable to sort out through the normal channels within prison then contact: Vegan Prisoners Support Group or The Vegan Society. These organisations work closely together and one of them will be able to assist.

Ensure that you supply them with a diary of events as mentioned in the Food and Nutrition section (Keeping a Record of your Diet).

The Vegan Society:

Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street, Birmingham, B18 6HJ, tel 0121 523 1730.

Membership of the abovementioned society is no longer necessary in order to obtain a vegan diet in prison so membership is optional.

Vegan Prisoners Support Group:

P.O.Box 194, Enfield, Middx, EN1 4YL

These groups can not usually make representations about the following because they are not strictly a vegan issue:

- Taste of food
- Food provided which you are allergic or intolerant to such as spice, onions or tomatoes. We would recommend that you make an application to see the Catering Manager to discuss this issue. Failing that Healthcare or the prison doctor may be able to assist by providing a written letter confirming that you can't tolerate the food in question.
- Over-cooking of food
- Substitution of one meal for another with an acceptable alternative
- Timing of the issue of supplements and vegan extras

This booklet has been produced by VPSG

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