

## Vegetarian Ingredients Q&As

‘Penne with sweet corn and assorted vegetables’, ‘stir-fried noodles with bean spouts’ and ‘rice with lotus root and black fungus’ are vegetarian meals. Although they provide plenty of vegetables, these vegetarian meals lack meat, fish, egg and alternatives and hence are low in protein content. In fact, vegetarian meals can also provide the energy and nutrients that meet our daily needs as long as suitable meat alternatives are chosen. Below are Q&As on suitable vegetarian ingredients recommendations for reference.

### 1. What vegetarian foods are suitable for substituting meat?

Dry beans, soy products, seeds and nuts are suitable meat alternatives as they are rich in protein, iron and some essential amino acids that the body needs. However, a number of soy products available in the market are high in fat or sodium after processing such as deep-frying and seasoning. It is therefore recommended to minimise the intake of such food items.

| Healthier choices   | Choices that are high in fat or sodium<br>(recommended to choose less)   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry beans<br/>such as soybeans, chickpeas, red kidney beans, adzuki beans, black-eyed peas</li> <li>• Non-deep fried soy products<br/>such as firm/ silky tofu, dried bean curd, fresh bean curd sheets, non-deep fried bean curd sticks, soybean pulp</li> <li>• Seeds and nuts<br/>such as sesame seeds, walnuts, cashew nuts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep-fried soy products<br/>such as fried bean curd, ‘vegetarian goose’, fried tofu, deep-fried bean curd sticks</li> <li>• Stinky tofu</li> <li>• Deep-fried nuts</li> </ul> |

Moreover, processed vegetarian ingredients like ‘vegetarian chicken’, ‘vegetarian meat’, ‘vegetarian ham’, egg bean curd have not been deep-fried but are high in sodium. Therefore, frequent consumption is not advisable.

### 2. Are green peas, string beans and mushrooms suitable meat alternatives?

Green peas, snow peas, French beans, bean sprouts, string beans, mushrooms are vegetables. They have a much lower protein content than dry beans and therefore are not suitable meat alternatives.

### 3. What about seitan and ‘Kao Fu’? Are they suitable meat alternatives?

Mainly made from high-gluten flour, seitan and ‘Kao Fu’ have a higher protein content than gourds and leafy vegetables in general. However, they lack certain essential amino acids that the body need. Vegetarians are therefore advised to use them only occasionally to replace meat as a source of protein.