

# FLEXITARIAN

## **What is a flexitarian?**

We all know a vegetarian, but what is a flexitarian? Simple: this is a person who still eats fish or meat but has a vegetarian diet several times a week. Not a vegetarian and not a thoroughbred carnivore, but somewhere in between. Is this a lifestyle you should consider? YES! Below I tell you more about the advantages of living as a flexitarian.

## **Advantages of being a flexitarian**

### *1. Health benefits*

The World Health Organisation is very clear when it comes to meat consumption: less is better. Certainly the intake of red and processed meat (such as salami and bacon). These increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes and other disorders.

Thus, red meat belongs to category 2A. This means that there is not enough strong evidence, but there is a strong suspicion that it is carcinogenic. Processed meat falls into category 1 (this includes asbestos and smoking), which means that there is sufficient scientific evidence of its carcinogenic effect.

Furthermore, several studies show that eating red and processed meat increases the risk of type 2 diabetes. When red meat is replaced with healthy sources of protein, this risk is significantly reduced.

And finally, of course, the effect on weight. A high meat consumption, especially of processed meat, increases the effect on obesity. Obesity, in turn, brings with it numerous other health risks (such as cardiovascular disease, muscular disorders and osteoporosis).

### *2. Environment*

All newspapers and scientific studies make no secret of the fact that excessive meat consumption has a major impact on our planet. Not only through the methane gases emitted by the animals themselves but also through the entire production process. Globally, the livestock industry contributes 12% of global greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention deforestation, overfishing and water consumption.

## **What about days without meat or fish?**

There are many different meat substitutes on the market today. Unfortunately, a lot does not always equal easier, because even with meat replacements it is always important to check the packaging. Green packaging does not automatically mean green. Below is an overview of a number of possible meat substitutes:

### **Meat substitutes, Main ingredient, What?**

- Quorn, Mycoprotein, A fungus that is related to the mushroom. Quorn is rich in protein, fibre and low in fat and calories.
- Tofu, Soya, Inhibited soya milk.
- Tempeh, Soya, Soaked soya beans mixed with a type of fungus.
- Seitan, Wheat gluten (or spelt gluten), The starch is washed out of a bread dough. That starch is then cooked in a broth.

There are also a number of foods that are used as meat substitutes:

### **Dairy and eggs**

An egg speaks for itself. You can prepare these in all sorts of ways: boiled, fried, poached or processed in a dish such as a frittata. Dairy of course means milk, but also yoghurt, quark and cheese such as ordinary cheese from cow's milk, but also goat's cheese, feta and mozzarella, etc. However, there are also meat substitutes.

However, there are also meat substitutes that are made on the basis of dairy products, namely on the basis of curd. Curd consists of essential proteins that are extracted from the lumped proteins in milk.

In addition, dietary fibres from algae are added to give a firm structure to the meat substitute.

### **Vegetables, pulses, grains, nuts**

And of course there are also meat substitutes based on grains, pulses, nuts and vegetables. However, these are not full-fledged meat replacements compared to soya, for instance, as the amount of protein or iron in these products is low.

## **Please note!**

*A vegetarian product is not automatically a healthy or good product, so here are a few tips:*

- Avoid breaded vegetarian products.
- Always pay attention to the packaging: fats, proteins and carbohydrates.
- Avoid ready-made vegetarian dishes.
- Preferably choose full-fledged meat substitutes.

## **And if you do eat meat or fish...**

Don't get it wrong! Meat and fish contain many valuable nutrients. Meat, for instance, is rich in iron, vitamin B12, protein and zinc. While fish is rich in proteins, multiple unsaturated fatty acids, water-soluble vitamins such as B6 and B12, omega fatty acids, etc. Here are a few more tips:

- Choose variety; go for less and choose consciously. So choose less red or processed meat and more types of meat such as chicken, turkey, veal, etc.
- Alternate between meat, fish and vegetarian. Variation pays off and prevents an eating pattern where meat takes the upper hand.
- Reduce the size of meat or fish portions. A healthy portion of meat or fish is 100 grams. (This is 120 to 150grams weighed raw).

Fancy a meal without meat or fish?

Then contact our Superintendent team for inspiration [superintendents@garrets.com](mailto:superintendents@garrets.com)

Enjoy your meal!

*Dean Verhoeff, Nutritionist  
Lead Superintendent*