

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**VEGAN DIET REQUIRES OMEGA 3 AND B12 BOOST**

People following a vegan diet may require additional Omega 3 and Vitamin B12 supplementation to reduce an excess risk of heart disease.

While meat eaters are known for having a significantly higher combination of cardiovascular risk factors than vegetarians, people following strict vegetarian and vegan diets are not immune from risk as their diets tend to lack several key nutrients including iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and Omega 3.

The Zhejiang University of China's 30 year study suggests that following a vegan lifestyle that is low in Omega 3 and B12 may have a high risk of developing blood clots and arterial disease – both of which increase the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

Professor Shaun Holt, medical advisor and researcher says that while meat eaters are known to have a significantly higher incidence of certain cardiovascular risk factors, vegetarians need to ensure adequate intake of Omega 3 and B12 to reduce their risk of a cardio event.

"Vegetarians and vegans generally have lower concentrations of B12 and Omega 3 which may lead to a high risk of developing blood clots and hardening of the arteries. Supplementation of these two nutrients is key to alleviating such risks," says Prof. Holt.

Michelle Palmer, Executive Director of Natural Products New Zealand says that vegetarians and vegans need to ensure they get all the necessary nutrients to stay healthy and that because some of these nutrients are only found in animal products, supplementation is necessary.

"As well as Vitamin B12 and Omega 3, zinc and iron are two other important nutrients that can be lacking in a vegetarian or vegan diet. It is not always possible to get sufficient quantities of these nutrients from a plant-based diet and the only way to ensure adequate levels is to supplement," says Mrs Palmer.

*Source: Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry  
Volume 59, Issue 3, Pages 777-784, doi: 10.1021/jf103846u  
"Chemistry behind Vegetarianism"  
Author: D. Li*

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*Note: Natural Products New Zealand (NPNZ) represents over 80% of the Natural Products industry. Based on a survey of wholesale and retail sales information, export data and industry surveys, NPNZ's members make up the overwhelming majority of the natural products industry in terms of product lines, turnover, employment and exports.*

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