

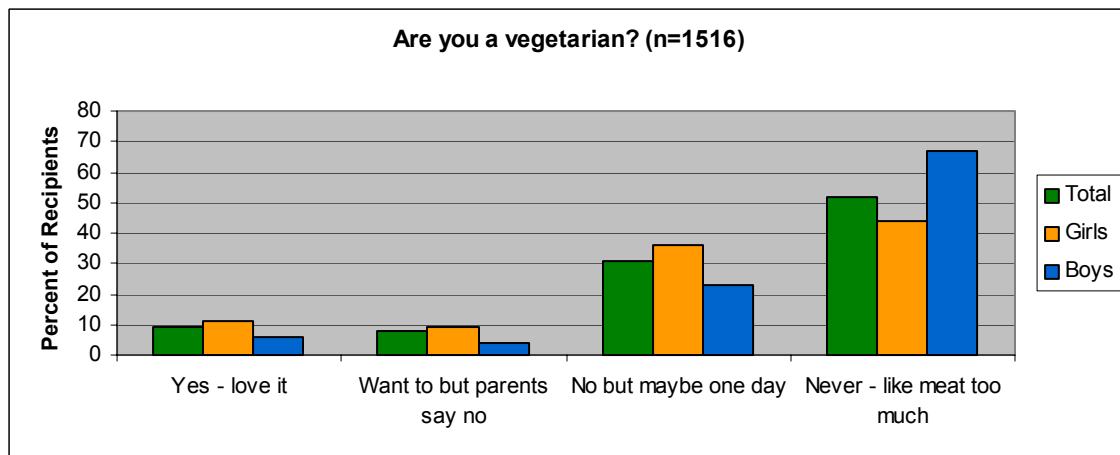


KID TRENDS REPORT – August 2003

Veggie Maddness

More and more kids are now experimenting with and adopting a vegetarian lifestyle. According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), teenagers are the fastest-growing group of vegetarians.

In a recent poll on yabber.net we asked kids aged 8 to 15, “Are you a vegetarian?”. 11% of girls and 8% of boys said, “Yes, I love it” and an additional 9% of kids indicated they want to be vegetarians, but their parents won’t let them.



Although, vegetarian kids are still the minority, kids in general have a very positive attitude towards this lifestyle.

MANY FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASE IN KIDS' VEGETARIANISM

- **Greater General Acceptance.** The vegetarian lifestyle has become more mainstream in North America in the last few years. Previously, it was believed that a vegetarian diet was inadequate for growing kids; however, in recent years it has become accepted by many parents, paediatricians, and nutritionists.
- **Increased Availability and Variety of Veggie Products.** Until a few years ago, veggie foods were only available in health food stores. Now numerous veggie-friendly products are available in major grocery stores throughout the country, making it easy for children to substitute meat in their diet. These products also mean no additional work for parents to prepare vegetarian meals for their kids, making them more willing to let their child try this lifestyle.

- **Ethical Issues.** Kids today are socially conscious. With increased access to information on the Internet, kids are much more savvy about ethical issues than previous generations. One example, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has launched a kid site <http://www.petakids.com/index.html>. This site provides information on several ethical issues including, the treatment of animals on factory farms, and how the production of meat contributes to world pollution and deforestation, to health benefits associated with a vegetarian lifestyle.
- **Weight control.** Some researchers speculate that girls may be attracted to the vegetarian lifestyle out of a desire to lose weight. So it's not surprising that young girls are more than twice as likely as boys to stop eating meat.
- **Role Models.** Some kids experiment with vegetarianism because it seems 'cool' or because their friends are doing it. Other kids are emulating celebrity role models who are outspoken about being vegetarian.

CELEBRITY "VEGGIE" ROLE MODELS

Today, numerous celebrities and music artists openly follow a vegetarian lifestyle. Not surprisingly, kids often identify with their favourite celebrities by emulating their veggie diet. Some celebrity vegetarians include:

- Reese Witherspoon
- Kelly and Ozzy Osbourne
- Natalie Portman
- Orlando Bloom
- Josh Hartnett
- Members of bands such as AFI, Good Charlotte and Sum41
- Lisa Simpson (fictional but still popular)

CANADA LEADS THE WAY

It's easier than ever for Canadian kids to explore the vegetarian lifestyle. Many school cafeterias offer vegetarian options, plus QSR's such as Harvey's, Burger King and McDonalds all have vegetarian options.

Canada leads the way, as the Burger King Veggie burger and McDonald's McVeggie were both first introduced in Canadian restaurants.