Transcript for **Teens going veggie**

**Speaker 1:**  I switched to vegetarianism two years ago because I read an article about all the health benefits – best decision I've ever made. I feel so much healthier now. My skin is really good and my hair is much shinier. You have to be super-careful though that you still get all the nutrients you need in your diet. The main problem for me is that I'm the only vegetarian in the family, and the others want to eat meat and fish. So sometimes it's a bit of a pain for my mum, because she's the one who does most of the cooking. She usually cooks for the rest of the family, then throws something together quickly just for me. She says I should learn to cook for myself, but I've got so much homework at the moment ... OK, I am a bit lazy about cooking. I'm going to have to get my act together or I'll be condemned to a diet of salads and omelettes, which I like, but if that's all you're eating, it's pretty boring.

**Speaker 2:**  Did you know that there are about half a million vegans in the UK? That's people who don't eat any animal products at all. They reckon the number is growing because of teenagers on social media – like me! That's where I got links to videos which convinced me that it's the best option for animals, our planet and my health. I did a lot of research into what kinds of things to eat before I changed my diet. It's really easy to find vegans online who'll answer questions and give you advice. I've been given lots of useful tips, like you can eat chickpeas and spinach for iron — you know, to make up for the iron you'd get from meat in a conventional diet. I still really miss fried eggs and normal chocolate — oops, I mean non-vegan chocolate. My family have been supportive about the change, but I get teased a bit at school. Some people think that being a vegan is weird. Luckily I've got a lot of friends who tell them it's cool.

**Speaker 3:**  I gave up eating meat a couple of years ago because at the time I was following a celebrity who was a veggie. Stupid reason, I know, but you see beautiful, glamorous people on Instagram and you want their lifestyle, so I became a vegetarian. I don't miss meat but I still eat fish sometimes, which sort of isn't really allowed. My main problem is that I'm not too keen on vegetables. My dad finds that hilarious. He's always going, 'How can you be a vegetarian if you don't like vegetables?' I do like chips, though, and tomato ketchup – they're made from vegetables, aren't they? I don't eat that much fruit either, apart from bananas. Anyway, but because my diet is a little on the unhealthy side, I take multivitamins every day. I also try and avoid rubbish like fizzy drinks and sweets. I don't think my diet's so bad. I feel pretty healthy.

**Speaker 4:**  My whole family is vegetarian, so if you're brought up that way it seems perfectly normal. My parents are both good cooks and we had a very varied diet. We ate lots of international dishes: Italian, Indian, Middle Eastern and so on. I never really missed meat or fish, except when I went out with friends. When I was young I remember lots of birthday parties in hamburger places – that was a bit tricky! When you're young you never like being different. But later, quite a few people in my class at school became vegetarian, so I was no longer the odd one out. Anyway, now I've left home, I keep having lapses. I wouldn't admit it at first, but I have tried meat a couple of times and I'm getting to really like fish. I feel awful sometimes, but I love food and I want to experiment with everything. I haven't told my mum and dad – they'd be shocked!

**Speaker 5:**  My main reason for becoming vegan was that I can't stand the way we treat animals – most

farms are run in such an inhumane way. I refuse to support factory farming. The treatment of hens is horrific, not to mention what they do to cows. So now I don't eat any animal products – no meat, obviously, but no eggs, milk or cheese either. And I don't eat fish, of course. When I first started to be a vegan, I found I was getting tired all the time, so I went to see a nutritionist and she said I wasn't getting enough protein. Now I'm a lot more careful and I eat lots of different nuts and seeds, and pulses – you know, dried beans, chickpeas and lentils. It's a bit time-consuming, buying and cooking special things, but now I feel really good. My family think I'm a bit weird, but they're gradually coming round to my lentil and rice specials!