

Vegetarianism might be in your genes: Study suggests genetic predisposition to a meat-free diet

[Analysis of the genomes of British vegetarians](#) found a link between their rejection of meat and mutations in their DNA that distinguish them from carnivores.

Researchers compared the genomes of 5,642 British vegetarians with those of more than 360,000 meat eaters. They discovered a single mutation, near a gene labelled VRK2, was strongly associated with people wanting to turn vegetarian.

The same study, by scientists from Oxford University and published by Wellcome Open Research, also found vegetarians tend to be more intelligent, gain higher academic qualifications than average and be more successful.

Meat-free diets are already popular among high-achievers in the arts world, with devotees including vegetarian musician Ellie Goulding and vegan actors Benedict Cumberbatch and Thandie Newton.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

The team, led by Georgina Fensom at Oxford's Nuffield Department of Populations Health, said finding out why people choose certain diets was important because food has such an impact on health.

The researchers' findings show that the mutation is associated with people becoming vegetarians but this does not mean it is the actual cause of their lifestyle change.

The VRK2 gene is, however, already known to be linked to brain and personality development as well as with having a taste for meat consumption.

[Read the original post](#)