



# THE DIVIDE BETWEEN VEGANS

PHOTO BY CATHERINE PIGG

## The cruelty free conflict: Different vegan perspectives

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The basic understanding among vegans leans toward making a conscious effort to not funding the exploitation of animals. This effort means the exclusion of meat, dairy and eggs from their diet as well as abstaining from purchasing products made from and tested on animals.

This seems simple when viewing the community from the outside, but within the community disagreements start over exactly where the line should be drawn when attempting to live a cruelty-free lifestyle.

Honey, modern medicine and vaccinations play a huge role in these debates among community members. The most radical vegans are against these practices because they include the exploitation or abuse of animals, or simply because they believe there to be health risks in consuming pharmaceutical drugs. Examples of radical vegans include YouTubers Ellen Fisher and Kristina Carillo-Bucaram.

Fisher posts videos about her life as a vegan mother who believes in a whole foods and a plant-based lifestyle. Her YouTube channel has a following of over 30,000 subscribers and each of her videos typically have over 100,000 views. Her children are shown to be happy and healthy, but Fisher faces criticism on her choice to not vaccinate her children. Her choice not to vaccinate comes from reading Tim O'Shea's book *Vaccination Is Not Immunization* and from reading VaxTruth.org. She recommends people do their own research on the subject instead of just taking a pediatrician's opinion as truth.

Makennah Bristow, a junior physics student minoring in math and astronomy, became vegan three years ago but she still consumes honey, takes medicine and gets vaccinated.

"On the topic of medicine and vaccination, I choose to use medicine and get vaccinations because that is what's best for myself and for everyone around me. While I know that medicine is tested on animals, there really are not many other options," Bristow said. "Medicine and vaccinations are essential for keeping us alive and healthy. In particular, it is dangerous for people to not get vaccinated. Refusing vaccination risks the health of everyone you come in contact with. Get vaccinated! You're saving yourself and everyone around you."

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported flu vaccinations reduce the risk of illness between 40 to 60 percent. The World Health Organization states vaccinations provide a safer chance of gaining immunity to an infection rather than getting it through natural infection, which may lead to cognitive impairments depending on the infection.

Youtuber Carillo-Bucaram mostly posts recipe videos to live a raw vegan lifestyle, meaning she does not consume any cooked foods. Her channel contains a following of over 900,000 subscribers. She has also posted about her choice to not consume modern medicine and faced backlash when she posted a video stating a raw vegan ice cream recipe could cure depression. Her critics' backlash on the vegan ice cream video followed the sentiments of not using depression as a synonym for sadness and how