



Protein Pointers

The cornerstone of any good nutritional program is to get adequate supplies of complete protein. Some sources of protein are better than others. Here are some health-promoting guidelines to remember about protein:

- Don't try to meet all your protein needs in one sitting — it's better to eat small amounts of protein throughout the day, preferably at every meal and snack. This encourages better blood sugar balance, more efficient weight control, improved mental focus and increased energy.
- If you're a vegetarian, make a special effort to eat a wide variety of plant protein sources such as legumes, nuts, seeds, nut butters, whole grains and super grains such as amaranth, teff and quinoa. Avoid nutrient depleted processed carbohydrates such as white pasta and white bread.
- Other vegetable protein sources to try are firm or extra-firm tofu, soy-based imitation-meat products, vegetable protein powders and spirulina. Think about adding protein-rich eggs and dairy products to your diet.
- Choose fresh-cooked, unprocessed meats, poultry and fish.
- Whenever you eat meat, balance it with fruits and lots of vegetables, especially non-starchy vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, zucchini, and dark, leafy greens. Fruits and vegetables are rich in nutrients, fiber and other protective substances that prevent constipation and aid in the digestion of meat.
- Processed meat products such as sausage, bacon, hot dogs and lunch meats often contain salt, sugar and harmful additives that increase the risk of disease.



What is Protein?

Proteins are part of every cell, tissue, and organ in our bodies. These body proteins are constantly being broken down and replaced. The protein in the foods we eat is digested into amino acids that are later used to replace these proteins in our bodies.*

Sources of protein include meat products (hamburger, fish and chicken), dairy products (cheese, milk, yogurt and cottage cheese), eggs, tofu, lentils and soymilk.

** Definition provided by cdc.gov*

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