

## Protein Facts

### Did you know?

- All foods contain more than one nutrient, in fact meat is a good source of protein, carbohydrate, fat, riboflavin and calcium
- There is no life without protein
- Protein is contained in every part of your body, the skin, muscles, hair, blood, body organs, eyes, even fingernails and bones.
- Next to water protein is the most plentiful substance in your body
- Proteins are composed of small units
  - The units are amino acids (the building blocks of protein)
    - There are 8 amino acids that we must get from foods these are called ESSENTIAL amino acids
- Most animal proteins contain all of the essential acids in sufficient amounts
- The protein of cereals, most beans and vegetables may contain all essential amino acids, but the amounts in these plant foods is less than ideal

### Functions

- Plant protein have a lower nutritive value than that of the animal protein
- Protein is primarily used in the body to build, maintain and repair body tissues
- Excessive protein is converted to energy for immediate use or stored in the body as fat
- Protein energy will be used only after other energy sources (carbohydrates & fats) are exhausted or unavailable

### Food Sources

- Protein is available from both animal and plant sources
- Surveys have shown that Americans eat almost twice as much protein as their bodies need
- Food consumption surveys show an average protein intake of approximately 100 grams per day
- About 70 percent of the protein is from animal products
- Some segments of our population may have marginal protein intakes including low-income, elderly, pregnant and lactating women

### Protein Food Sources

- You only need about 12-15% of your calories from protein, for example if you eat 2500 calories then you need 75 to 94 grams of protein per day
- One-third cup of nuts provides about 5 grams of protein and is equivalent to 1 ounce of lean meat
- To determine how many grams of protein you need a day calculate your weight in kilograms
  - Divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 and multiply that by 0.8
  - Example - weight  $160 \div 2.2 = 73$  kg (weight in kilograms) take weight in kg and multiply by 0.8.
  - Example -  $73 \text{ kg} \times 0.8 = 58$  grams of protein per day

Sources: National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics, Agricultural Extension Service the University of Tennessee and Utah State University Extension

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