

Protein – Even More Important Than You Might Have Thought

What is protein, and what does it do? Protein is the building block of much of the tissue in the body such as skin, muscles, bones, and organs. Protein is also essential to building, maintaining, and repairing body tissue.

But its job doesn't end there.

All of the antibodies that your immune system generates are made from protein. Sufficient protein in the diet is essential to warding off colds and flus and for promoting speedy recovery from viral and bacterial illnesses. If someone is getting recurring colds and flus or are slow to heal, insufficient protein intake could be a contributing factor.

Protein is also essential to maintaining blood sugar levels. Proteins take longer to break down in the body than carbohydrates do, so they provide a longer-lasting source of energy. Inconsistent blood sugar levels can lead to such things as weakness, waning energy levels and difficulty concentrating, and can even affect your mood. Children having difficulty concentrating in school or who get exhausted during the school day may be suffering from a lack of protein in their diets.

A GOOD BREAKFAST REALLY IS IMPORTANT

Whoever said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day knew a thing or two. Loading up on fats and carbohydrates at the beginning of the day or, worse still, skipping breakfast entirely can leave you worn out, unfocused, cranky, and hungry (never a good combination) by mid-morning.

Protein digests at a slower rate than carbohydrates so when you have protein as part of your breakfast

nutrition, you're not going to be ravenous by 10:00 in the morning. A hearty protein-rich breakfast will help to provide you with consistent blood sugar levels to sustain you through the day.

PROTEIN IS A MACRONUTRIENT

The difference between a micronutrient and a macronutrient is the quantity required. Macronutrients such as protein, carbohydrates and lipids (fats) are those food types that are required in large amounts. These three macronutrients provide energy for the body.

WHAT ARE COMPLETE PROTEINS?

Protein is made of up different types of amino acids that form a long chain. The chain of amino acids is a protein. Amino acids are what the body uses to build the protein of the muscles and regulate the immune system. Essential amino acids cannot be manufactured by the body; they must come from food. A complete protein is one that contains all of the essential amino acids in the correct amounts to make the chains which make the proteins and the antibodies the body needs.

SOURCES OF PROTEIN

The notion that protein insufficiency is exclusive to vegetarians is simply not true. There are non-vegetarians and vegetarians alike who do not get enough protein. This could be due to not enough protein in their diet or due to poor digestion of protein. Protein takes longer to digest than most other foods. It is digested in the mouth, stomach and intestines. If you are not digesting proteins

properly or are eating them with foods that inhibit protein digestion or if you are taking medications that inhibit protein digestion, you could become protein deficient.

Some excellent sources of protein are lean meat, poultry, and fish. Eggs and dairy products such as milk, yoghurt and cheese are also good sources of protein.

There are also a number of vegetarian sources of protein such as almonds, quinoa, broccoli, kidney beans, and many others. Protein-rich vegetables paired with grains such as brown rice or oats or paired with legumes such as chickpeas or black beans will form a complete protein.

Protein-rich foods are readily available to both meat-eater and vegetarians.

Forget the cereal, the muffins, the toast and peanut butter for breakfast. Instead, have a real protein-rich meal. Get a great start to the day, and see what a difference it makes!

There's no such thing as a diet that is perfect for everyone. Nutritional requirements vary from person to person. Call us at (780) 485-9468 today for a consultation with a one of our doctors and get a customized diet plan designed for your unique needs.