



Packed with Protein

by Lorraine Wallace

Protein is a highly debated subject! The most common source of protein is meat and so it is argued that animal protein is essential to maintain good health.

However, vegetarians and vegans will argue that you can obtain sufficient protein through alternative sources.

Proteins are important for growth and repair. They are needed for the structure, function and regulation of our cells, tissues and organs. I'm vegetarian and choose to eat very little dairy due to associated risk factors, but whether you eat animal protein or not, it's important to ensure that you are adequately nourishing yourself, so here's a basic overview.

Common protein sources:

- Meat/Poultry
- Fish
- Eggs
- Beans, Legumes & Peas
- Mycoprotein (Quorn)
- Protein Bars/Powders/Spirulina
- Processed soy products
- Vegetables (particularly leafy greens)
- Buckwheat
- Dairy
- Nuts/Seeds
- Grains/Quinoa



Am I getting enough?

Every body has unique needs. The best judge of that is YOU and how you feel. Age, health, physical activity, health goals and sustained injuries will all determine what's right for you. It's quite unusual for people to lack protein but common to have too much. Here are some indicators of having too much or too little:

Too little protein

Sugar/sweet cravings, feeling spaced out and jittery, fatigue, weight loss, loss of colour facially, feeling weak, anaemia, change in hair colour/texture and in more severe cases, skin inflammation and potbelly.

Too much protein

Low energy, constipation, dehydration, heavy feeling, weight gain, sweet cravings, body tightness, stiff joints, body odour, low calcium, halitosis. The body can become overly acidic resulting in a decline of kidney function and excessive animal proteins can increase the risk of heart disease.

High/low protein diets

High protein diets are commonly used for weight loss, generally in conjunction with cutting carbs. There is no disputing that this can lead to weight loss, however to do it intensively is not healthy for anything other than a short term measure. Cutting carbs completely removes one of the body's natural and essential energy sources and the increased protein can lead to the complications detailed, even weight gain, the opposite of desired effect. A balance of both (with complex carbs) is sustainable and healthier.

A low protein diet, usually in conjunction with increased carbs, is generally only medically recommended. It is highly effective for people with kidney or liver disease as it decreases the stress on the kidneys and liver or for conditions such as Tyrosinemia.

If you have any of the symptoms above, have no medical conditions, and recognise that you eat too much or too little protein, try experimenting for a few weeks with gently increasing or decreasing your intake and increase the range of sources. Track the results.

www.lorrainewallace.com
Email: lorraine@lorrainewallace.com ~ Tel: 05 55 68 15 77