

Understanding Protein: Are You Getting Enough



Protein is getting its shine as many companies are marketing new products with protein or highlighting amount of protein in their products. But what is all the buzz about anyway?

Protein is a macronutrient that your body needs to stay healthy. It is made of small parts called amino acids. Your body needs 20 types of amino acids. The body makes 11 of them on its own, but the other 9 must come from the foods you eat. These are called essential amino acids.

Protein is important to the body as it helps break down food, repair and grow tissues, and can even be used for energy when needed. Protein also keeps your skin, hair, and nails healthy, supports your immune system, builds muscles, and helps you feel full longer after eating. While protein is important, the body cannot store excess amounts, anything beyond our needs gets flushed out.

So, why are you seeing protein everywhere? With social media promoting high-protein diets and consumers wanting more protein-rich foods, companies are responding to consumer wants. The catch? Many are already consuming enough protein. Research has shown that high in-take of protein for a healthy individual is not dangerous, eating high-intake of protein often can harm the kidneys.

Should You Take Protein Supplements

1. **Calculate the amount of protein you need daily.** The recommended daily protein intake for an adult is 0.8g per kg of body weight or 0.36g per pound of body weight. An active individual who often trains or plays sports needs 1.2-1.7g per kg of body weight or 0.5-0.8g per kg of body weight.
2. **Look at what you are already eating.** Keep a track of the amount of protein you are eating. It is better to get protein from food before taking supplements.
3. **Buy supplements if you think there is a gap.** If you are not getting enough protein from the foods you are eating, buy supplements to help with your intake.
4. **Check the label.** Look for simple and clean ingredients if you are buying supplements. Avoid products that are high in sugar, fat, artificial flavours, and a long list.
5. **Listen to your body.** Once you have increased your protein intake, check-in to see if you feel fuller, energized, and balanced. Adjust protein intake if you are feeling low, bloated or uncomfortable.

It is great to see protein being easily accessible to consume as it has an important role for our body. However, it is important for us to reflect if we need to spend money on protein products if we are already hitting our recommended intake.

