

5 Benefits of Protein + How to Make it Complete

Description

Protein helps fuel and build us as we grow, then maintains our bodies throughout adulthood. Many of us only think of protein as something for the big, bodybuilder types, but it's something we all need.



Yes, protein powder is good as a *supplement*, but whole food sources should be our main source of this vital macronutrient. A few of the benefits provided by the macronutrient protein are:

- 1) IT BUILDS, MAINTAINS AND REPAIRS CELLS:** As you grow your body needs protein to construct every single cell including your bones, muscles, skin, vital organs and your blood vessels.
- 2) IT IS USED TO PRODUCE IMPORTANT CHEMICALS:** Antibodies are built using protein and are a key part of your immune system which helps your body fight disease. Enzymes are also constructed from protein and act as a catalyst for many important reactions in your body including digestion.
- 3) IT REGULATES IMPORTANT BODILY PROCESSES:** Your body's cells cannot move fluid directly, instead they produce proteins which attract water. These proteins can then be sent out to areas where fluid needs to be absorbed allowing a fluid balance to be maintained throughout the body.
- 4) IT HELPS YOUR BLOOD CLOT:** When your skin gets cut and starts to bleed, your body responds by producing fibrin, a stringy protein that forms clots. Once the fibrin has clotted, your body then produces another protein, collagen, which forms scar tissue and permanently heals the cut.
- 5) IT CAN ASSIST WITH WEIGHT LOSS:** First, it has a greater thermic effect than carbohydrates. This means that by eating protein you burn more calories during digestion and boost your metabolism. Secondly, studies suggest that protein can suppress your appetite by helping you feel satiated longer.

Protein is made up of 23 amino acids, 8 of which are essential. The 8 essential amino acids are "essential" because our bodies cannot produce them alone, and therefore need to acquire them from food sources or supplements.

The 8 essential amino acids are:

- " Isoleucine
- " Leucine
- " Lysine
- " Methionine
- " Phenylalanine
- " Threonine
- " Tryptophan
- " Valine

The other 15 non-essential amino acids we can produce on our own are:

- " Alanine
- " Arginine
- " Asparagine
- " Aspartic Acid
- " Cysteine
- " Glutamic Acid
- " Glutamine
- " Glycine
- " Histidine
- " Ornithine
- " Proline
- " Selenocysteine
- " Serine
- " Taurine
- " Tyrosine

A complete protein includes all 23 essential and non-essential amino acids. Incomplete proteins may have a few, but not all of the essential amino acids needed by our bodies. Animal products like seafood, poultry, beef, dairy, etc. are the most abundant source of complete proteins.



There are many vegetarian sources such as quinoa, buckwheat, soybeans, etc. that are complete as well. Don't think you need to avoid incomplete proteins though, they can be paired together to form a complete protein.



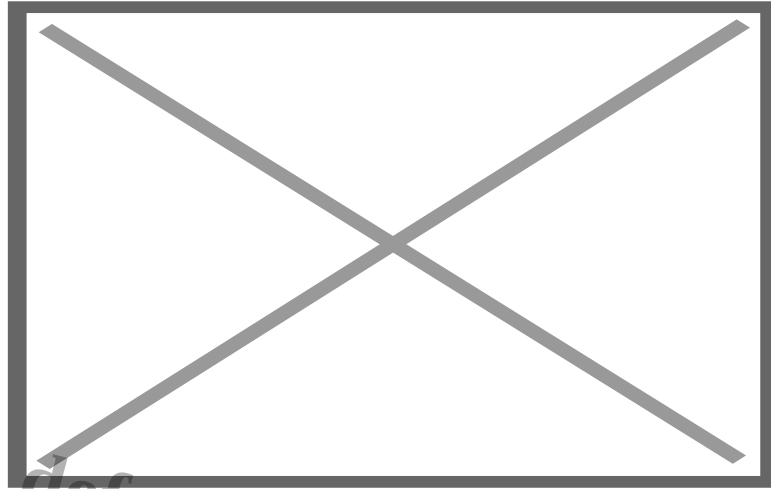
Follow these four principles to obtain a complete protein by pairing incomplete protein foods:

1. Combine legumes with grains – a classic example is rice and beans
2. Combine nuts or seeds with legumes or grains
3. Combine animal products with any vegetable product
4. Add a small amount of meat to a meal of vegetables

[protein, complete protein, amino acids, healthy, food](#)

Only eating foods that are complete proteins is expensive (especially for those constantly hungry little ones running circles around us!), so the ability to combine food to provide us with all 23 amino acids is, well, essential. A popular dish that's healthy (usually), tasty, and budget-friendly is rice and beans. This is a staple meal in many cultures and can be made to feed a crowd with little expense.

It's worth pointing out that incomplete protein sources do not have to be consumed at the same time. In order to reap the benefits of a complete protein, just consume different sources over the course of the day.



A helpful basis to begin combining foods for a complete protein

Try experimenting with different combos to come up with your own complete protein meal. Get your kids involved by creating columned lists of different complementary foods and have them choose what to eat for lunch or dinner. Healthy fat and carbohydrates also play an extremely important role in giving our body what it needs to thrive, but without protein, we just wouldn't be *complete*. ðŸ™,

Do you have any favorite dishes that make up a complete protein meal?

Have you ever thought about the quality of protein you're eating before?

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