

Animal vs. Plant Protein

Talking Points: April 29, 2009

Key Talking Points:

Choosing lean meat as a source of high-quality protein can actually be a calorie-saver.

- A 3 ounce serving of lean beef provides all of the essential amino acids you need in 180 calories. To achieve the same levels with plant protein you would have to consume two to three times as many servings, which equals many more calories.
 - You would have to eat 680 calories of peanut butter (more than seven Tablespoons) to get the same amount of protein available in a three-ounce serving of lean beef.
 - A three-ounce serving of lean beef provides about the same amount of protein as 1½ cups of beans but in half the calories.

The quality of the plant protein simple doesn't 'match up' to animal proteins such as beef because not all of the essential amino acids are provided.

- As a high-quality protein source, lean beef provides all of the essential amino acids or "building blocks" that people need for optimal health in fewer calories than plant protein sources such as beans and nuts.
- Vegetables are great but a vegetarian diet can be incredibly difficult to maintain because most individual plant proteins do not have the full package of amino acids you need to stimulate muscle growth and maintain good health.
- A complete high quality protein like lean beef provides all of those essential amino acids that your body needs on a daily basis.

It is very difficult to achieve the quality protein and other essential nutrients if you eliminate meat from the diet.

- Unlike plant sources of protein, such as beans, nuts and some soy products, lean meat is a source of high-quality protein and is the food supply's most readily available and easily absorbed source of iron and zinc.
- Even vegetarians who are diligent in making wise food choices run the risk of consuming less B-vitamins, zinc, vitamin A, protein and absorbable iron than meat eaters.
- Vitamin B₁₂ is not readily available in plant sources of protein yet beef is an excellent source of this and many other nutrients.
- Research shows cutting back or eliminating meat in the diet could lead to deficiencies of these key nutrients such as zinc and vitamin₁₂.
- Beef is the leading food source of zinc and vitamin B₁₂ in the diet.
 - Zinc is essential for healthy immune function, physical and mental development, wound healing and appetite control. Vitamin B₁₂ promotes growth and helps to maintain health.

U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend eating lean meat: That high-quality protein is hard to find anywhere else. And not getting that protein can have serious consequences.

- Getting adequate protein improves health and well being both physically and mentally.
- What's important to remember is that no matter what dietary pattern you choose, you need to ensure adequate nutrient intake and it's much easier to meet your daily requirements and have a healthy diet by choosing naturally nutrient-rich foods first.
 - A balanced diet is one that includes high quality protein like lean beef, eggs and dairy foods, in addition to fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Research shows that high-quality protein such as lean beef plays an increasingly important role in maintaining muscle mass, weight management, and disease prevention.

- A protein-rich diet containing lean beef assists in maintaining muscle mass and which contributes to burning fat. In fact, several studies indicate that protein is more satisfying than carbohydrates.
- When coupled with exercise, protein can help people build muscle strength while they lose or maintain weight.
- High quality protein is important at so many stages of life. People like athletes, older adults, pregnant women and teenagers need to get the right mix of nutrients for a set number of calories.
- Including high quality protein sources such as lean meats, poultry and dairy help you maintain good health over a lifetime.

- With the overweight/obesity epidemic growing and baby boomer generation aging, the benefits of high-quality protein have never been more critical. Although the optimal amount of protein is uncertain, research suggests consuming 10-35 percent of your calories from protein is considered beneficial.
 - We have a growing population of aging baby boomers who need to protect their muscle mass as they age. A vegetarian diet puts that goal at serious risk.

Lean beef contains protein which leaves you less hungry and that's very important in dieting.

- These fad diets tend to aim for the short term fix. But they are hard to sustain.
- Build a plan for the long term that you can stick with: and that usually includes balancing your diet with fruits and vegetables and lean meat and other high quality protein.
- Research shows advantages to consuming higher levels of good quality protein, like lean meat, throughout the day for weight management and better health. When you're trying to lose weight and maintain muscle it makes sense to include foods like lean beef, eggs and dairy.

Additional Points:

- **Despite popular perceptions, data indicates most Americans are not over-consuming protein.**
 - As many as 19 percent of adult men and 31 percent of adult women have dietary protein intakes of all sources that are below the current Recommended Dietary Allowance.
- **Lean beef is an excellent source of five essential nutrients (protein, zinc, vitamin B₁₂, selenium and phosphorus) and a good source of an additional five essential nutrients (niacin, vitamin B₆, iron, riboflavin and choline).**
 - In addition, there are 29 cuts of beef that meet government requirements for lean or extra lean – and that includes some of Americans' traditional favorites like flank steak, tenderloin, T-bone steak and 95% lean ground beef.