

## Protein & Diet

Protein is an essential nutrient for cell maintenance and repair, and regulation of a wide range of bodily functions. How much protein we need to eat in our diet usually depends on our *ideal* body weight. Ideal body weight is used because amino acids are not needed by fat cells, only by our lean body mass.

**Protein & Diet - Amino Acids** Protein is made up of amino acids, like building blocks. Proteins from different foods in our diet contain different amino acids. There are 22 amino acids, divided into essential and non-essential amino acids. Essential amino acids must appear in our diet because they cannot be made by the body. The 8 essential amino acids we must eat in our diet include: isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

**Protein & Diet - US Guidelines on Protein and Diet** The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of protein according to U.S. government standards is 0.8 gram per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of ideal body weight for the adult. This protein RDA is said to meet 97.5% of the population's needs.

**Table 1. Approximate Protein in Selected Foods**

<b>Foods</b>	<b>Protein Content</b>
Ostrich	10 grams/ounce
Beef	7 grams/ounce
Poultry	7 grams/ounce
Fish	7 grams/ounce
Large Egg	7 grams/egg
Milk	8 grams/cup
Cheese (eg. Cheddar)	7 grams/ounce
Bread	4 grams/slice
Cereal	4 grams/1/2 cup
Vegetables	2 grams/ 1/2 cup
Soybeans (dry)	10 grams/ounce
Peanuts	7 grams/ounce
Lentils (dry)	6.5 grams/ounce
Red beans	6 grams/ounce
Baked potato	9 grams/8 ounces
Cashews	5 grams/ounce