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PROTEIN

Protein was the first substance to be recognized as a vital part of living tissue. The name was derived from a Greek word meaning “of first importance.” Proteins are the building blocks of many structures in our bodies, and comprise half of our dry body weight (water taken out). More facts about proteins:

- They stabilize blood sugar levels in the body, minimizing weight gain and maintaining energy and mood levels throughout the day.
- All tissues in the body depend upon adequate protein supplies in order to maintain their structure and function.
- Every cell in the body is held together with proteins. Individual cell functions, especially within the immune system, require proteins for proper functioning.
- We need protein in order to make all hormones and neurotransmitters, these are responsible for communication between our cells and our organs.
- Adequate protein is vital for proper function of the detoxification pathways in our liver, i.e. daily living.

In order to make the complex proteins our body requires, we need correct ratios of *amino acids*, the building blocks from which proteins are made. Some foods have complete proteins (they include all the necessary amino acids), and some foods have incomplete proteins (which means they don’t have all the amino acids we need, so they must be combined with other protein sources). For example, grains and legumes should also be consumed together to serve as a protein source, each is missing an amino acid that the other supplies.

Following is a list of some protein-rich foods and their estimated protein content:

<u>FOOD</u>	<u>QTY</u>	<u>PROTEIN</u>
Meat, chicken and fish	1 oz	7-10 grams
Eggs	1 egg	7 grams
Milk (cow & goat)	1 cup	8 grams
Cheese (cheddar, Swiss)	1 oz	6-7
Cottage cheese	½ cup	12 grams
Yogurt	1 cup	10-17 grams
Soy milk	1 cup	3-6 grams
Soy cheese	1 oz	5-6 grams
Rice or almond milk	1 cup	1-2 grams
Legumes (beans: refried, lentils)	½ cup	7-9 grams
Tofu	½ cup	10 grams
Firm tofu	½ cup	20 grams
Miso	2 Tbsp	4 grams
Nuts & seeds	1 oz	4-7 grams
Nut butters	2 Tbsp	8 grams
Seed butters	2 Tbsp	5 grams
Bread	1 slice	1-5 grams
Rice, oats, buckwheat	½ cup	3 grams
Quinoa	½ cup	11 grams
Barley	½ cup	10 grams
Amaranth	½ cup	14 grams
Garden or soy burger	1 burger	11 grams
Brewers yeast	1 Tbsp	3 grams