

Of Primary Importance

Protein comes from the Greek work “proteus” meaning “of primary importance”. Protein comes first in a healthy nutrition program. Proteins are organic compounds made of amino acids. In humans (including animals), amino acids are obtained through the consumption of food containing protein. There are 10 essential amino acids (EAA) for humans. Meat is complete in all essential amino acids. Vegetables, grains and beans are not complete in all essential amino acids. When consuming protein from sources other than meat you need a wide range of variety to keep the EAA's in balance. This is because vegetables, grains, and beans are not an adequate source of protein. Having an offset amino acid balance isn't optimal for building muscle, losing weight or fueling performance.

Another component of a healthy nutrition program is essential fatty acids. Essential fatty acids (EFA) cannot be constructed within an organism and must be obtained from the diet. There are two families of EFA's- omega~6 and omega~3. The omega~6/omega~3 ratio is important to a healthy balanced diet. Grain fed meat, almonds, cashews and eggs are a few of the EFA sources high in omega~6. A good quality fish oil will help balance out those ratios. A better option if you prefer not to take a lot of fish oil is eating grass fed beef, wild caught fish, free range chickens and omega~3 enriched eggs because they have more favorable ratios.

Unfortunately for those of you waiting for me to list essential carbohydrates, there aren't any. The body doesn't have to have carbohydrates. Protein can be converted to glucose in a process called gluconeogenesis. Gluconeogenesis (GNG) is a metabolic pathway that results in the generation of glucose from non-carbohydrate carbon substrates such as lactate, glycerol, and glucogenic amino acids. Due to this process carbohydrates are not required to maintain blood glucose levels in healthy individuals.

Some other things to keep in mind. One gram of protein per pound of body weight is a good starting point for figuring your daily protein intake. (example- If you weigh 240lbs eating 240 grams of protein/day be sure to break it up between 5 or 6 meals/day. That's about 40 to 50 grams per meal.) Don't forget to eat your fats, remember they are essential. Fish oil, coconut milk, heavy cream, flaxseed oil, etc... are the best and easiest choices. When eating for weight loss your carbohydrates should come from vegetables preferably the green leafy type. Eliminate fruit while in weight loss mode, but once desired weight is reached feel free to bring fruit back into the diet. Last but not least take your vitamins C, D, E and minerals zinc and magnesium. Pick the chelated minerals for better absorption (more to come on this topic).