

The truth about protein



You probably often get told that you need to eat lots of protein in your diet! That's because protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair itself, including your hair, nails, skin, and organs like your heart, liver, and kidneys. You consume protein when you eat:

- ✓ meat, chicken, fish
- ✓ eggs
- ✓ nuts and seeds
- ✓ dried beans and lentils
- ✓ dairy products such as milk, yoghurt, and cheese
- ✓ soy products.

Proteins are made up of amino acids that are essential for healthy cells. Your body can make some of the amino acids you

need, but there are nine that you must include in your diet. These are called essential amino acids.

Protein from animal sources, such as meat and milk, is called complete protein, because it contains all nine essential amino acids. Most vegetable protein is considered incomplete because it lacks one or more of the essential amino acids. However, peas, beans, and lentils are all sources of protein.

Like fats and carbohydrates, protein is a macronutrient that gives us energy. The amount of protein you need to eat depends on your age, but teenagers especially need protein because their bodies are still growing.

