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The Truth About Protein

One of the most frequently asked questions of vegans and vegetarians is, “where do you get your protein?” The simple answer is “from everything I eat”. It is a commonly held, albeit erroneously, belief that we need to eat large amounts of protein. This protein that we are supposed to eat must come from meat, fish and dairy products. This belief is also false.

We have heard ever since that the vegan/vegetarian lifestyle does not contain enough protein and that proteins that are consumed are not the “right” or complete proteins. Again, false.

First we must take a look at protein. Protein is actually the combined structure of amino acids. Therefore the need is not for protein, but for amino acids. There are some 50,000 proteins found in the body, created from 22 amino acids. Of these 22, fourteen can be synthesized by the body and eight cannot. These eight are called the essential amino



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acids and these must be supplied from the foods we put into our bodies. Further we have what is called an amino acid pool. This is where the amino acids are stored until needed. So the amino acids do not come directly from the last meal we just ate. Those amino acids go into storage and are utilized as needed.

Therefore, as long as we are eating healthy, balanced meals we have a constant supply of aminos to be taken and stored in the amino acid pool. The actual daily amount of protein needed is about 56 grams. This can easily be supplied by one cup of beans and one cup of rice three times a day or a breakfast of in season fruit, one or two pieces, a salad for lunch and dinner including one cup of romaine lettuce, one tomato, ¼ red pepper, one carrot, ¼ cucumber and a handful of sprouts.

The truth is we eat entirely too much protein. Just one T-bone steak contains a whopping 70 grams of protein. Well above and beyond the daily requirement. That is just one meal. What happens when we look at what we ate for breakfast and lunch? The problem lies in the fact that the body can only digest about 25 grams of protein at a time. What happens to the excess? It remains in the body and creates toxins that are known to contribute to arteriosclerosis, heart disease, arthritis and osteoporosis.

As far as quality protein, vegetable protein is just as good as meat protein, without the baggage. We can absorb 70% – 90% of the available protein and vegetable is easily digested. What to do? Reduce or eliminate your consumption of meat, remember meat is any animal used for food, so this includes mammals, fish, seafood and any other animal products. If you must eat meat, eat it as an addition to a healthy meal of vegetables and grains, not as the meal itself.

For further information contact us using the contact form.