



What's the Big Deal about Animal Protein & Chronic Diseases?



Protein, vital to the structure, function, and regulation of the body's tissues and organs, is made up of amino acids. Your body can make some amino acids on its own, but others are essential, meaning they must come from food.

Plant sources of protein may be missing one or more essential amino acid while animal sources tend to be complete, meaning they contain all of the essential amino acids.

- Just because a food is a complete protein, does not necessarily mean that it is healthier than a non-complete protein. The other nutrients making up the protein food ultimately determines the quality.

Animal proteins tend to be higher in saturated fat, sodium, and other unfavorable nutrients. Plant proteins tend to be higher in fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Heart Disease:	Cancer:	Type 2 Diabetes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Eating even small amounts of red meat, especially processed red meat, regularly is linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke, and risk of dying from heart disease.○ Reducing red and processed meat consumption to less than half a serving per day may decrease the risk of dying from heart disease by 10%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Consumption of processed meat is 'carcinogenic to humans' and the consumption of red meat is 'probably carcinogenic to humans', according to the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer.○ Grilling red meat over high temperatures creates potentially cancer-causing compounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A diet high in red meat, especially processed red meat, increases risk of type 2 diabetes.○ Replacing 1 serving of red meat with 1 serving of nuts, low-fat dairy products, or whole grains lowers the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by about 16 to 35%.

The bottom line: Choosing healthy proteins can reduce your risk of some chronic diseases.

References:

1. Protein. Harvard School of Public Health. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/protein/>. Published February 27, 2017. Accessed December 6, 2017.
2. What are proteins and what do they do? - Genetics Home Reference. U.S. National Library of Medicine. <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/primer/howgeneswork/protein>. Published December 6, 2017. Accessed December 6, 2017.