

# Proteins

## Go lean with proteins!

Protein provides essential nutrients called amino acids that help build and repair muscles, heal wounds and fight infections. Your body can't make all the amino acids you need, so these essential amino acids must come from your food.

**Protein sources in the diet come from meats and plant-based sources.**

- Meats are considered complete proteins that provide all the essential amino acids our bodies need.
- Choose lean meat proteins.
- Meat with less marbling indicates it is leaner.
- Cut off excess fat around the edges.
- Remove the skin on chicken and turkey.
- Drain off extra fat when cooking meat.



You don't have to eat meat to get enough protein. There are plant-based proteins, too. Most plant-based proteins aren't considered complete proteins because they don't provide all the essential amino acids we need.

**Eat a variety!**  
**Pairing different plant-based proteins can provide all the essential amino acids in a meal (beans and rice, corn and beans, tofu and nuts).**

**Did you know?** 

Quinoa and tofu are two of the few plant-based proteins that are considered complete proteins and provide all the essential amino acids we need.

By Anne R. Lindsay, Ph.D., M.S., FACSM ; Macy Helm; and Jennifer M. Wood, M.S., RDN, LNHA, CSG

Copyright © 2025, University of Nevada, Reno Extension.

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a place of work and learning free of discrimination on the basis of a person's age (40 or older), disability, whether actual or perceived by others (including service-connected disabilities), gender (including pregnancy related conditions), military status or military obligations, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, national origin, race (including hair texture and protected hairstyles such as natural hairstyles, afros, bantu knots, curls, braids, locks and twists), color, or religion (protected classes). Where discrimination is found to have occurred, the University will act to stop the discrimination, to prevent its recurrence, to remedy its effects, and to discipline those responsible.

A partnership of Nevada counties; University of Nevada, Reno; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



University of Nevada, Reno  
**Extension**  
 College of Agriculture,  
 Biotechnology & Natural Resources