

3. Proteins

- Protein is a nutrient made up of elements carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen.
- These elements combine to form chemical substances called ***amino acids***.
- There are EIGHT essential amino acids that our bodies need from food.



Food Sources of Protein

Meat, fish, poultry (domesticated birds that produce eggs), milk and milk products, nuts, chick peas, beans.

Types of Proteins

- 1. Complete Proteins:** The proteins in animal foods such as meat, fish, chicken, eggs and milk contain all EIGHT ESSENTIAL AMINO ACIDS.
- 2. Incomplete Proteins:** Plant proteins contain some, but usually not all, essential amino acids. Examples; baked beans, lentils.

Why do we need Protein?

- Growth, maintenance and repair: Protein is needed for the growth, maintenance and repair of every cell in the body. They are also needed for new tissue such as hair and nails.
- As a secondary source of energy.
- Production of enzymes and hormones.
- Build and repair muscles.

How much protein do we need a day?

Generally, teenagers need 2-3 serves of meat and meat alternatives and 2-3 serves of milk and milk products a day.