

Health & Wellness

March
2026
Issue 18

Protein

This month's Health and Wellness topic is **Protein**. For this issue, we're talking about protein classifications, how to get protein, how much protein we need, and how our protein intake can help us as we age.



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Welcome to DuPage Senior Citizens Council/Kane Senior Council's March Health & Wellness Newsletter!

We're here to bring you a new topic relating to wellness as well as new brain teasers, seasonal recipes, book recommendations, and more!

Providing Meals and More...



DuPage Senior
Citizens Council



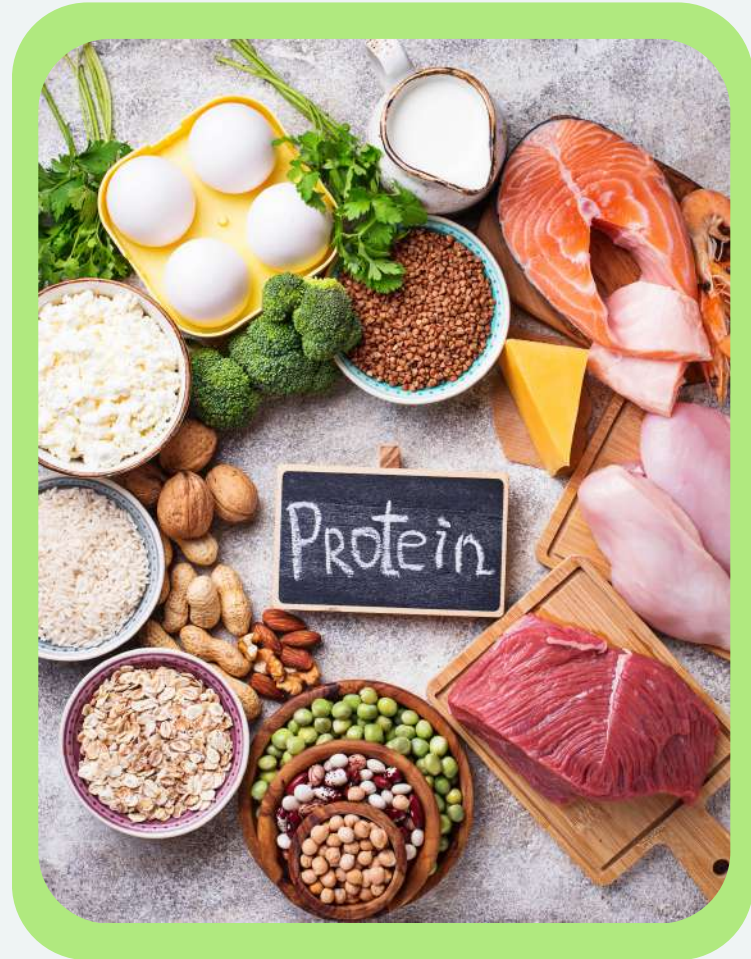
Kane Senior
Council

Protein

Introduction

Proteins are the building blocks of life. Every cell in the human body contains protein, and the basic structure of protein is a chain of amino acids.

You need protein in your diet to help your body repair cells and make new ones.



Protein is an essential **macronutrient**, composed of amino acids, vital for repairing tissues, building muscle, supporting immune function, and maintaining bone health.

Protein provides calories, or “**energy**” for the body. Each gram of protein provides **4 calories**.

Protein & Amino Acids

The protein in food is broken down into parts called **amino acids** during digestion. The human body needs a number of amino acids in **large enough amounts** to maintain **good health**.

Amino acids are found in **animal sources** such as meats, milk, fish, and eggs.

They are also found in **plant sources** such as soy, beans, legumes, nut butters, and some grains (such as wheat germ and quinoa).

You do not need to eat animal products to get all the protein you need in your diet.

Amino Acids are classified into three groups:

Essential amino acids

cannot be made by the body. They must be supplied by food. They do not need to be eaten at every meal. The balance over the whole day is more important. They include: histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine.

Nonessential amino acids

are made by the body from essential amino acids or in the normal **breakdown of proteins**.

Conditional amino acids

are needed in times of **illness** and **stress**.

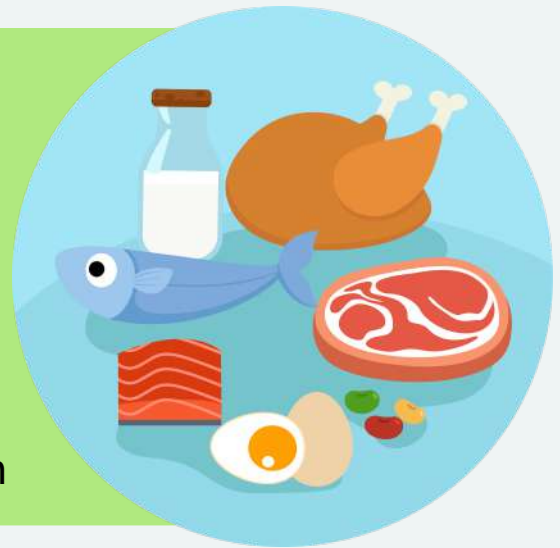
How Much Protein Do I Need?

The National Academy of Medicine recommends that adults get a minimum of **0.8 grams of protein for every kilogram of body weight per day**, or just over 7 grams for every 20 lbs of body weight.

Individual needs will vary based on factors such as **age, exercise level, health conditions**, and **overall dietary pattern**. A registered dietitian can help determine one's individual protein needs.

One ounce (30 grams) of most protein-rich foods contains 7 grams of protein.

- 1 oz (30g) of meat, fish, or poultry
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup tofu
- ½ cup (65 grams) cooked beans or lentils
- Low fat dairy is also a good source of protein



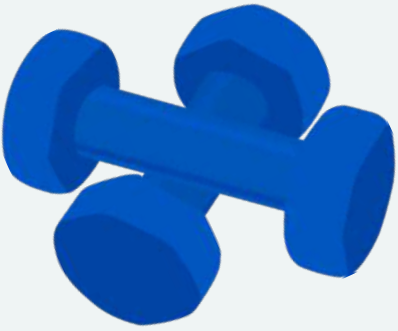
What's the harm in getting too much protein?

Consuming extra protein often comes from eating meats high in **saturated fats**, which can add to **elevated levels** of the **LDL** - or “bad” - **cholesterol**.

Choose **plant-based proteins** such as legumes, nuts, lentils, or chickpeas. These are not only high in protein but **fiber** as well.

Protein as we Age

Aging brings many changes to the body including **muscle loss**.



Older adults who don't engage in **regular strength training** can lose **4 to 6 pounds of muscle** per decade.

Age-related muscle loss is called **sarcopenia** and it affects nearly **50%** of adults above the age of **80**.

Sarcopenia is a natural part of aging and can impact **quality of life** by increasing the risk of frailty, disability and loss of independence

To combat Sarcopenia, you can build muscle through **exercise**.

Building muscle requires **protein**, so when you're aiming to **increase muscle mass**, your body needs **more protein**.



Increasing dietary protein intake can support **muscle repair** and **growth**.

While the best **source** of protein in your diet is **whole foods**, some older adults who cannot get adequate protein through food alone may benefit from **supplementation**.

Many people find protein supplements, such as **protein powders**, as an easy solution to meeting their daily protein needs.

Protein powder can be easily added to oatmeal or smoothies, or simply mixed into a glass of water.

To decide if you should add protein supplements to your diet, **consult** with your **doctor**.



Health & Wellness Education

WRAP UP

- Protein is a **component** of **every cell** in the human body and is necessary for proper **growth** and **development**.
- Protein helps your body **build** and **repair cells** and **body tissue**.
- Protein is a major part of your skin, hair, nails, muscle, bone, and internal organs. Protein is also found in almost all **body fluids**
- Protein is important for many body **processes**, such as blood clotting, fluid balance, immune response, vision, and **production** of **hormones**, **antibodies**, and **enzymes**.

For more health and wellness tips, information and resources, visit our website.



BRAIN BOOSTERS

SUDOKU

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Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Where is the only place where today comes before yesterday?

WORD SEARCH



WORD BANK

ENERGY

CALORIES

SARCOPENIA

REPAIRING

PROTEIN

ESSENTIAL

EXERCISE

AMINO ACIDS

MUSCLE

STRENGTH

SUPPLEMENT

Our Picks of the Month

March Recipe: Lasagna Flatbread

Recipe from: AllRecipes



Photo Credit: lutzflcat

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 oz) container ricotta cheese
- 1 (8oz) package shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 (3oz) package Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb sausage
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 6 flatbreads
- ½ (26 oz) jar marinara sauce

Directions:

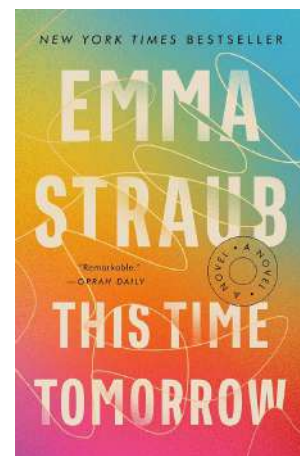
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F
2. Combine ricotta cheese, ½ of the mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, egg, and Italian seasoning in a bowl
3. Cook sausage in a skillet over medium heat until no longer pink, 5-10 minutes; drain. Stir in marinara sauce
4. Spread ⅓ of the cheese mixture evenly on each flatbread; cover with sausage mixture. Top with remaining mozzarella cheese.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until cheese is melted and bubbly, 10 to 15 minutes.

Our Book Pick of the Month

This Time Tomorrow by Emma Straub

A novel following 40-year-old Alice Stern, who, on her birthday, wakes up as her 16-year-old self in 1996.

Reunited with her young, healthy father, she navigates her past as well as her present while learning to cherish the time she has.



ANSWER KEY

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Riddle Answer:

Where is the only place where today comes before yesterday?

Answer: The Dictionary

Brain Boosters Answers

11

ANSWER KEY

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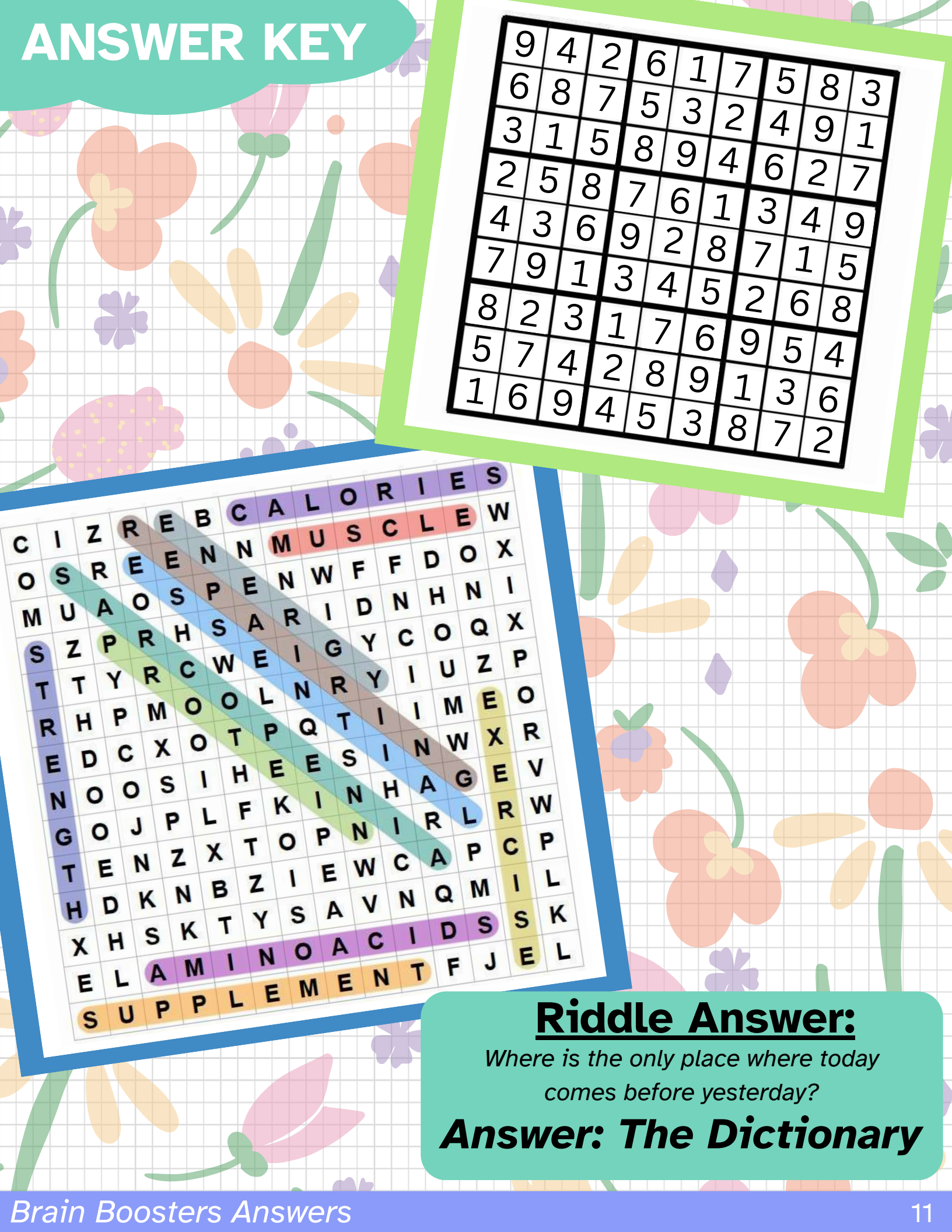
Riddle Answer:

Where is the only place where today comes before yesterday?

Answer: The Dictionary

Brain Boosters Answers

11



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DuPage Senior Citizens Council

1990 Springer Dr. Lombard, IL 60148

630-620-0804

www.DuPageSeniorCouncil.org

Kane Senior Council

418-B Airport Rd. Elgin, IL 60123

630-338-0999

www.KaneSeniorCouncil.org