



Amino Acids

Nutrition tips from DuPage Senior Citizens
Council and Kane Senior Council

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The Building Blocks Of Life

We know that our body needs protein but what we may not know is that amino acids are the molecules that combine to form proteins.

Amino acids and proteins are the building blocks of life.

All About Amino Acids

Proteins are long chains of amino acids. Your body has thousands of different proteins that each have important jobs. Each protein has its own sequence of amino acids. The sequence makes the protein take different shapes and have different functions in your body.

You need amino acids for vital functions such as building proteins, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Amino acids are concentrated in protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, and soybeans.

Your body needs 20 different amino acids to function properly. While all 20 of these are important for your health, only 9 are classified as essential.

Although your body can make nonessential amino acids, it cannot make essential amino acids, this means that **they must come from your diet.**

Amino Acids

Sources of Amino Acids

The best sources of essential amino acids are animal proteins such as meat, eggs, and poultry.

Meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, and fish contain all nine essential amino acids.

However, some plant foods, such as the soy products edamame and tofu, also contain all nine essential amino acids. This means that they are all “complete” sources of protein.

Your body produces the rest of the 11 amino acids you need. These are called nonessential amino acids.

Some nonessential amino acids are classified as conditional. These amino acids are made by your body and are only considered essential when you are sick.



Fill your plate with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy and lean protein at each meal for balance and adequate intake of amino acids.