

Nebraska Beef Council

...strengthening demand for beef

www.nebeef.org

P.O. Box 2108 • Kearney, NE 68848 • 308-236-7551 • 800-421-5326 • Fax 308-234-8701

Contact: Adam Wegner, Director of Marketing

adam@nebeef.org

308-236-7551

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BEEF NUTRITION

With the abundance of information available today regarding food and nutrition, it can be difficult to determine fact from fiction. Below are answers to some of the most pressing questions when it comes to beef and your health.

Q: Can beef be enjoyed regularly as part of a healthy, balanced diet?

A: Absolutely! A 3-ounce serving of beef—about the size of an iPhone—provides more than 10 essential nutrients including protein, iron, zinc and vitamins B12 and B6. One serving of beef contains about half of your Daily Value for protein in around 170 calories on average (and just 150 calories for a serving of lean beef).¹

Q: How much beef should I eat at a meal to meet my daily protein requirements?

A: Beef is a great protein option and source of essential nutrients to enjoy any day and for any meal! Dietary Guidelines recommend adults eat 5.5 ounces of protein foods, including beef, per day. Beef can be enjoyed for any meal throughout the day so incorporating beef into various meals will help you meet the recommended Dietary Guidelines.²

Q: What benefits do the 10 essential nutrients in beef provide to the human body?

A: High-quality protein, like that found in beef, plays an increasingly important role in muscle maintenance, weight management, and the prevention of chronic diseases. Research also shows the iron, zinc and B vitamins found in beef play an essential role in developing and maintaining cognitive ability in children and adults.³

Q: What nutritional benefits does beef offer me that other proteins don't?

A: Beef is a nutritional powerhouse in a smaller package than other protein foods. Apart from being a great source of protein, it would take 8 ounces of cooked chicken breast to eat the same amount of iron as in just 3 ounces of beef, and nearly 7 times (20 ounces) the amount of chicken to get the same amount of zinc in a serving of beef!¹

Q: Is grass-finished beef more nutritious than grain-finished beef?

A: While grass-finished beef tends to be a little leaner, both grass-finished and grain-finished beef are natural sources of more than 10 essential nutrients including protein, iron and zinc. All cattle, whether grass or grain-finished, spend the majority of their lives eating grass on pastures and provide delicious and nutritious beef.⁴

Q: Can eating beef help improve cholesterol levels?

A: Yes! Research shows that a heart healthy diet and lifestyle that includes lean beef, even daily, improved cholesterol levels. About half the fatty acids found in beef are called monounsaturated fatty acids, the same kind found in olive oil, and, as part of a heart-healthy diet, can reduce cholesterol levels.^{1,5}

Q: Can plant-based diets and proteins provide the same amount of protein as beef?

A: Many sources of plant protein do not contain all the amino acids your body needs. Beef supplies more protein and nutrients in significantly fewer calories than plant proteins. A lean beef burger patty averages

around 154 calories and 25 grams of protein. Conversely, a veggie burger patty may be lower in calories, but only contains 13 grams of protein per serving.¹

Q: Can eating beef cause cancer?

A: Cancer is a complex disease and most scientists agree that many factors, including lifestyle and environmental conditions, must be taken into consideration-- making it unrealistic to isolate a single food as a cause of cancer. In fact, despite all the investment made in cancer research, there is no single food, including beef, that has been proven to cause or cure cancer.⁶

Q: Do higher-protein diets have any negative health effects like kidney damage or bone loss?

A: No, this is a common myth about protein. Eating a diet higher in protein can actually help people lose and maintain a healthy weight and support a healthy metabolism. Research shows that eating 25-30 grams of protein at each meal is ideal for optimal body benefits.⁷

-
1. • U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 28 (Slightly revised). Version Current: May 2016. Internet: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>
 2. • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.
 3. • Paddon-Jones D, et al. Protein, weight management, and satiety. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2008;87:1558S-61S.
 - Wolfe, R. The underappreciated role of muscle in health and disease. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2006;84:475-82.
 4. • Van Elswyk ME, McNeill SH. Impact of grass/forage feeding versus grain finishing on beef nutrients and sensory quality: the U.S. experience. *Meat Sci* 2014;96:535-40.
 5. • Roussel MA, et al. Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet study: effects on lipids, lipoproteins, and apolipoproteins. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2012;95:9-16.
 6. • Schoenfeld JD, Ioannidis JP. Is everything we eat associated with cancer? A systematic cookbook review. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2013;97:127-34.
 - Miller PE, Alexander DD, Weed DL: Uncertainty of results in nutritional epidemiology. *Nutr Today* 2014;49:147–52.
 7. • Phillips SM, et al. Protein "requirements" beyond the RDA: Implications for optimizing health. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab* 2016;41:565-72.
 - Wallace TC, Frankenfeld CL. Dietary protein intake above the current RDA and bone health: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Am Coll Nutr* 2017;36:481-96.

####

The Nebraska Beef Council is a non-profit organization served by a nine-member board of directors. The volunteers oversee Nebraska's beef checkoff and checkoff-funded programs. Programs for marketing and promotion are funded by the \$1 beef checkoff.