What is Plant Protein?

Plant protein is exactly what it sounds like — protein that comes from plants. Proteins are made up of chains of various amino acids, and different proteins can contain different types and amounts of amino acids.

Many animal proteins have all the essential amino acids that the human body needs, though they can also contain too much saturated fat. Plant proteins, on the other hand, don’t have nearly as much saturated fat, but some of them have fewer essential amino acids than animal proteins. This can make it harder for the body to process and use them. The way to sidestep this imbalance is to eat a variety of plant proteins.

Eat Lots of Different Types of Protein!

Variety is especially important when it comes to protein foods — both plant and animal. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that people eat protein foods from a variety of sources, asserting, “Consumption of a balanced variety of protein foods can contribute to improved nutrient intake and health benefits.”

Try some of the following sources of plant protein, and don’t forget to mix and match!

- Beans
- Peas
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Whole grains
- Tofu and soy products

Choose options that are low in salt and solid fats to boost heart health!