

CHAPTER 6

PROTEINS

OVERVIEW

This chapter introduces amino acids and the basic structure and organization of proteins. Essential and nonessential amino acids are differentiated. The digestion and absorption of proteins are explored. The biological functions of protein in producing body constituents; hormones and enzymes; maintaining fluid and acid-base balance; immune function; forming glucose; and its uses as an energy source are detailed. The Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein is discussed. Dietary recommendations for protein intake include comments regarding risks associated with high protein intakes and the importance of dietary plant proteins. Protein content in foods is listed. Protein-energy malnutrition is described along with appropriate prevention and treatment.

The Nutrition Insight addresses the interest in soy protein. Vegetarianism is the topic addressed in the Nutrition Issue section.