

SUMMARY

Proteins are important component of every cell in the body. Hair and nails are mostly made of protein. Our body uses protein to build and repair tissues, to make enzymes, hormones, and other body chemicals. They are complex organic compounds comprising of basic structure referred to as amino acids. They provide energy for the body. They are made up of one or more polypeptide chains folded into a characteristic 3 dimensional configuration. The specific configuration of a protein is required for its biological activity. In addition, they directly contribute to the flavor of food and are precursors for aroma compounds and colors formed during thermal or enzymatic reactions in production, processing and storage of food. They contribute to the structure, texture & taste of food. They are often added to foods to enhance various properties. Protein configuration is described in terms of four levels of organization; primary, secondary, tertiary & quaternary. Proteins are categorized in different classifications such as based on their quality, function, essentiality, structure & conformation, chemical composition etc. It is important to consider the amount, quality and balance of essential amino acids in the proteins that we ingest. The amount of protein required in the diet is inversely proportional to the amount of complete or complementary proteins that are ingested. The protein obtained naturally in our diet includes both plant & animal sources.