



# Wellbeing Insights

*Living a Better, More Vibrant Life*



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### March: Nutrition Month

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## Protein Powder 101

Whether your goal is to build muscle mass, lose weight or simply incorporate more nutritional grab-and-go snacks into your busy schedule, chances are protein powder has made an appearance in your planning. But what is this stuff anyway, and how in the world do you choose the right one with so many options? For starters, you'll want to do your research based on your particular goals. We've got the basics here to give you a head start on finding the protein powder that's right for you.

### Terminology

**Concentrates and Isolates:** Both undergo a concentration process. Typically, concentrates contain 70 to 80% protein and 20 to 30% other components such as carbohydrates, minerals, moisture and fat, depending on the degree to which the supplement has truly been "concentrated." Isolates are typically about 90% protein.

**Amino acids** are the building blocks of protein. Essential amino acids are those that cannot

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# Protein Powder 101

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be produced by your body (and therefore must be obtained in the diet). There are 20 total; they are indicated on packaging as “EAA.” A “complete amino acid profile” means that all 20 EAAs are present in the powder. Non-essential aminos can be manufactured by the body. BCAA stands for branch chain amino acids, a non-essential amino that is mostly necessary if you have a rigorous strength-training goal.

## Measurement Standards

**Bioavailability (BV):** Measures the amount of protein absorbed by the body that can actually be used. It is measured on a scale from 0 to 100 (although, with concentrated sources, may slightly exceed 100). The higher the number, the better your body can use the protein it absorbs from that source.

## Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAA):

Compares the amino acid profile of the source against a standard amino acid profile with the highest possible score being a 1.0, indicating maximum amino acid digestibility.

## Sources

■ **Whey:** The most popular source by far, whey is derived from cow’s milk and represents 20% of the total protein found in milk. It absorbs quickly and is ideal for post-workout consumption. Isolates may have decreased overall nutritional content due to the refining process, while “undenatured” whey may offer additional antioxidant benefits. Whey has a BV of 104, PDCAA of 1.0 and a complete amino acid profile.

■ **Casein:** Represents the remaining 80% of protein found in cow’s milk, casein is digested much slower than whey, taking up to

six hours to pass through the body. It is a common allergen and autoimmune trigger, so anyone with an autoimmune disorder or lactose sensitivity should avoid casein. It has a BV of 77, PDCAA of 1.0 and complete amino acid profile.

■ **Egg:** This form is primarily derived from egg whites and is good for those with lactose intolerance. The processing does deplete the otherwise beneficial nutritional profile of eggs, including B vitamins, choline and omega-3. Egg protein has a BV of 100, PDCAA of 1.0 and a complete amino acid profile.

■ **Soy:** Quality of soy powders varies tremendously. If you are choosing soy, it may be wise to go organic as many soy powders are loaded with glyphosate, which is linked to cancer and can interfere with thyroid function. Some soy powders are excellent choices, but this form will require you to do your homework to ensure a good product. It has a BV of 74, PDCAA of 0.98 and a complete amino acid profile.

■ **Pea:** Gaining in popularity amongst vegetarians and vegans, pea protein is the closest powder to a whole food source; that is, it’s packing other nutritional benefits, including a healthy dose of fiber which will help keep you full. It’s got a BV of 65, PDCAA of 0.893 and an incomplete amino acid profile.

■ **Hemp:** Derived from the cannabis plant, hemp protein is an excellent source of omega-3s and B and D vitamins and also has the same fiber benefits as pea protein.

These are the most popular protein powders at the moment, although this isn’t an exhaustive list. A good rule of thumb is to avoid overly hyped products with outlandish claims. Protein is wonderful and also natural. Anything in a close-to-pure state won’t make you superman or have you dropping half your bodyweight overnight. Check the label for fillers, as well. In particular, avoid artificial sweeteners, dextrin, milk solids and vegetable oils.

“Nourishment is not limited to food alone. It includes all the ways we feed the many needs we have.”

- THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EATING



## On the Menu

# Oh Em Ghee

An ancient clarified form of butter called ghee [gee] has gained a lot of attention recently due to its impressive nutritional profile. And while ghee might be in the trending health-food spotlight right now, it's far from being a new food in other cultures around the world. Ghee has been around for centuries in parts of India. It has been considered a food of the gods in Hinduism and is encouraged to be eaten in large quantities at Hindu weddings to boost fertility.

Ghee is a staple in ancient Ayurvedic medicine where it is typically used in conjunction with different herbs to promote healing. Here are just some of the benefits of cooking with butter's clarified cousin:

- It's rich in butyrate, which helps with proper digestive function and has a powerful anti-inflammatory effect.
- One tablespoon of ghee contains 15% of your daily recommended intake of Vitamin A, which plays a role in healthy vision, skin and neurological function.

- It contains conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which has been shown to protect against cancer and improve insulin resistance.
- Ayurvedic medicinal practice uses ghee to help with ulcers, constipation and promotion of healthy eyes.
- It contains little to no lactose due to the clarifying process, which makes it a great alternative to butter for those who are lactose intolerant.

### Keep It Fresh

Unopened jars of ghee do not need to be refrigerated; simply store them in a dark and cool place. Opened jars can be kept in a kitchen cabinet (away from light) for up to three months or in the refrigerator for up to a year. Due to its saturated fat content, ghee will become hard in the refrigerator. It will become soft again once taken out and left at room temperature.

## Lemon Ghee Chicken

### Ingredients:

- 8 chicken thighs
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- ¼ cup coconut cream
- 3 Tbsp. ghee
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp salt

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°. Place chicken skin side down in a 13 x 9 pan. Sprinkle lightly with salt and flip over so the skin side is up. Set aside. In medium saucepan, combine lemon zest, juice, ghee, coconut cream, garlic powder, salt and rosemary. Stir over medium heat until all ingredients become well combined. Pour the heated mixture over the chicken and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. If you want the skin crispy, increase oven temperature to 500° and bake an additional 5 to 10 minutes.

*Adapted from [www.jaysbakingmecrazy.com](http://www.jaysbakingmecrazy.com)*

### Nutrition Info

Per Serving (1 chicken thigh)

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| <b>Calories</b>      | 218   |
| <b>Carbohydrates</b> | 1.8g  |
| Sugar                | 0.5g  |
| Fiber                | 0.7g  |
| <b>Protein</b>       | 15.9g |
| <b>Sodium</b>        | 201mg |

# Food Comparison: Butter vs. Margarine vs. Ghee



|                              | Butter  | Margarine   | Ghee   |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Manufacturing Process</b> | Butter is the dairy product made from churning milk or cream. Churning separates the butterfat from the buttermilk.   | Margarine is made from vegetable or plant oils through a fairly complex, manmade manufacturing process.<br><br>The main components of margarine are oils usually extracted from oilseeds but may also contain taste enhancers, emulsifiers, colors, vitamins and stabilizers.   | Ghee is produced by heating butter to remove the milk solids and water.<br><br>One of the benefits of ghee's production process is that it virtually eliminates lactose and casein protein from the final product. This makes it an excellent alternative to butter for those who are lactose intolerant.  |
| <b>Smoke Point</b>           | Butter has a relatively lower smoking point than ghee and liquid cooking oils, coming in at around 250°F.<br><br>Cooking butter or any oil at too high of heat can release dangerous free radicals and destroy the food's naturally occurring health benefits.  | The smoking point of margarine varies, depending on the type of oils used to make it. For more traditional, hydrogenated margarines, the smoking point is comparable to regular butter, around 250° to 300°F.   | Ghee is an excellent choice for cooking because of its high smoke point of 485°F. This means ghee can be used easily in baking, sautéing and roasting without destroying its nutritional benefits.   |
| <b>Fat Content</b>           | Butter consists of approximately 80% butterfat.<br><br>In the past few decades, butter has gained a bad rep for contributing to cardiovascular disease due to its high saturated fat content. However, more recent research has found multiple health benefits associated with limited amounts of saturated fat, putting butter back on many dinner tables. | Margarines can vary greatly in their fat content, depending on the types of oils they contain. More traditional margarines have high levels of trans fats made with hydrogenated oils, which actually increase risk of heart disease by raising LDL (bad cholesterol) levels.<br><br>Today there are better margarines available. They use stanol-based ingredients (from plants) that contain unsaturated, heart-healthy fats. | Ghee is also high in saturated fat but is unique because of its short- and medium-chain fatty acid makeup. CLA, one of the primary fatty acids in ghee, has been associated with reduced body fat compared to its long-chain fat counterparts.<br><br>Additionally, ghee is an excellent source of butyrate, a fatty acid that is essential in maintaining digestive health and reducing inflammation. |



## DIY Foot Soak

Our feet bear the burden of all our weight every day, yet we often don't give them the TLC they deserve. A quick foot soak can do wonders for your stress level. If you don't already have something to soak your feet in, buy a laundry basket with no holes, a foot spa or a pedicure bowl, or simply use your bath tub. Here's a great soak recipe to start showing your feet some love:

1. Fill bowl with warm/hot water
2. Throw in some foot stones if you have them
3. Add ½ cup of honey, 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar and 1 sliced lemon

Then just sit back and relax for 20 minutes!

# Basic Food Energetics

We often think of food only in terms of how it tastes and the pleasure we derive from it, especially if it tastes really good. Or on the extreme end of the spectrum, you may see food as the enemy to your weight or comfort in times of distress. Let's take a journey to think outside of the box and break down what food does at its most basic level – it creates energy in the body.

Let's start with what the digestive system does with food. Food is broken down to nutrients, which then go into your bloodstream and travel to your cells. Once they arrive, nutrients are transferred into this very important high-energy molecule so you can perform all of your metabolic activities.

If our food gives our body energy, this leads us to the next step on the journey. Let's consider that the types of foods we eat and the way we eat them create different energies in the body. You might have noticed that you gravitate toward warmer food during Fall/Winter and cooler foods like salads and fruits in Spring/Summer. Warmer foods like soups and stews are easier for the body to digest and absorb because they have already been partially broken down by the cooking process. Those chilly nights seem to call for soups to warm the body up. During Spring/Summer you have more heat in the body from being outside, absorbing the light from the sun, so foods like salads, green leafy veggies and fruits help bring the energy of the body down so you feel cooler. Citrus fruits, especially lemons, help cool the body down.

Let's take it a step further and look at it from another angle. Could foods grown during that particular season meet your body's needs the best? For example, strawberries are more beneficial in the Summer when they're in season because your body is naturally warmer from the heat outside and needs these types of foods to cool you down. Winter harvest produces heartier vegetables like sweet potatoes and winter squash. These vegetables create a warming effect on the body and help you survive during cold times.

Albert Einstein said, "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." This can apply to how and what foods to eat during the season because whatever is grown not only is fresher but designed to help you deal with that particular season. The next time you're at the store, take advantage of the benefits of food energetics by remembering that your body gets more energy from food that was grown outside this season because it has absorbed the energy of the sun.



## Mindful Minute



March is the month of Sleep Awareness. Many people underestimate the power of sleep and think they can continually run off of limited night bliss. However, a good night's sleep helps with mood and hormone regulation and can even help you lose weight. As we dive into March, try these **sleep-friendly practices** to catch some more ZZZs.

1. As you're lying in bed, focus on your breathing. Bring your attention away from the busy mind and really pay attention to your breaths and how they feel.
2. Scan your body while you're lying there. Start at your head and move all the way to your toes. Notice where you feel tense, sore or even relaxed. Really become mindful of how the entire body feels. As you focus on each part of the body, they may seem heavy and feel like you're sinking deeper into your bed.
3. Lastly, envision something peaceful and calming. Stay in that vision and keep it simple as you drift off into your slumber.

# 8 Ways to Get Kids Excited about Nutrition

## Advice from a Dietitian & Mother

Contributed by Michelle Kruse, RD, CBIZ Wellbeing Coordinator

As a dietitian, people are always asking me for help getting their kids to eat more healthfully. While I have a lot of suggestions, as a mom, I know it's not always easy, but these tips have been kid approved:

- 1. Enjoy your food.** Our lives are busy and so are our kids. We often eat while doing other things and barely think about it, but... *food should be enjoyable!* When we allow ourselves just a moment to focus on flavor and what we're eating, we allow our minds to register satisfaction (a big help with hunger cues and maintaining a healthy weight). Model this to your kids. While eating, have a dialogue with them about the food itself – the colors, textures and flavors of each bite. This is an invaluable practice for them to avoid mindless overeating later in life.
- 2. Be a role model.** Our kids aren't going to eat their veggies if we aren't eating ours. I work with picky kids (I have one) and their picky parents every day. Instead of focusing on what you don't like,

focus on what you do. Remember, you control the pocketbook and the grocery purchases.

- 3. Pick two colors.** Involve kids in meal planning and offer choices, but limit them. Every Sunday we shop for lunch box items for the week. At the store I give my daughter two colors to choose for the week. This week was green and red. She chose cucumbers, kiwi, cherry tomatoes and strawberries. Every day she'll pick a red and a green item for her lunch box. Next week, yellow and blue, and so on. This works great for dinner prep, too.
- 4. Dip it!** Let's face it, raw veggies can be bland, but dip... everyone loves a good dip! Making raw veggies a vehicle for a healthy dip can be fun. (Think plain Greek yogurt and seasoning, hummus or guacamole.) Kick it up a notch by adding veggies to the dip itself. Pulverizing spinach, avocados or beans into our usual dip recipes is a great way to mask the stuff they aren't excited about without changing the flavor much.

**5. Pick a protein.** Early on, teach your kids what foods are protein sources. My daughter knows that at every meal we have a source of protein. Now that she's 13 and prepping her own breakfast, I can count on her to make good choices. Greek yogurt and berries is her favorite go-to.

**6. Pack healthy snacks and make them visible.** I always have pumpkin seeds and trail mix in the console of my car for between-activities snacks. I keep apples and cuties in a bowl on the kitchen table and veggie dip in the fridge. Make the healthy choice the easy first choice (or, if necessary, the ONLY choice).

**7. Cook together.** Use a cookbook with pictures or apps like Mealime and AllRecipes, or browse online sites like superhealthykids.com for easy make-together meal ideas. Let the kids choose healthy recipes that incorporate colorful veggies and a source of lean protein.

**8. Make it fun!** Who says colored eggs have to be reserved for Easter? Kids can construct scenes (like a tree or an animal) with fresh, cut veggies and fruit before eating.

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