

acid-base balance. The maintenance of the correct level of acidity of a body fluid.

amino acid. One of the building blocks of protein molecules.

antibody. A protein made by the immune system to defend the body against infection and disease.

buffer. A compound that can counteract an excess of acid or base in a fluid.

complementary proteins. Two or more incomplete protein sources that can be combined to provide all the indispensable amino acids.

complete protein. A protein that contains all the indispensable amino acids.

deficiency disease. A sickness caused by a lack of an essential nutrient.

denaturation. A change in shape that happens to protein molecules when they are exposed to heat, acids, bases, salts of heavy metals, or alcohol.

dispensable amino acids. The amino acids the body can make for itself, also called nonessential amino acids.

incomplete protein. A protein that is missing or short in one or more of the indispensable amino acids.

indispensable amino acids. The nine amino acids the body is unable to make, also called essential amino acids.

kwashiorkor. A protein deficiency disease.

legume. A plant that has a special ability to capture nitrogen from the air and transfer it to protein-rich seeds.

marasmus. A wasting disease caused by a lack of calories and protein.

nitrogen balance. A comparison of the nitrogen a person consumes with the nitrogen he or she excretes.

protein. An energy-yielding nutrient composed of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen.

protein-energy malnutrition (PEM). A condition caused by a lack of calories and proteins in the diet.

vegetarianism. The practice of eating a diet consisting entirely or largely of plant foods.