What it is:	Protein is a component of food, made up of amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks for major parts of a lean human body. They are crucial to the minute-by-minute regulation and maintenance of the body. Your body makes its own supply of amino acids, and also must get some from food. Protein comes in many different forms.
Importance:	Protein is the basic building block of cells and tissues that are needed to keep us strong. It is crucial for vital functions, regulation, and maintenance of our bodies.
Trends:	The current American diet trends encourage an increase in protein consumption (and carbohydrate reduction). There is another belief system that we do not need a lot of protein, and encourages people to eat much less protein. There is a very judgmental attitude in the field of nutrition, i.e., "my way is the only way." However, there must be a way that is not dogmatic. Try experimenting and see what works for you, your body, and your lifestyle.
Too little protein:	Common symptoms include sugar and sweet cravings, feeling spacey and jittery, fatigue, weight loss, loss of healthy color in facial area, feeling weak, anemia, change in hair color and texture, skin inflammation (in severe cases), and pot belly (in severe cases).
Too much protein:	Common symptoms include low energy, constipation, dehydration, lethargy, heavy feeling, weight gain, sweet cravings, feeling "tight" or stiff joints, foul body odor, halitosis, and calcium loss to compensate for acidic status in body. The body may also become overly acidic and kidney function can decline. (Stress required to process excess proteins causes the kidney to face increased pressure to filter toxins and waste).
Things to consider:	Your mind may disagree with what your body wants. Trust your body. It is rare for American people in this day and age to be protein deficient. Consider your heritage, ancestry, blood type, activity level, and life goals when choosing protein. Protein consumption is a very personal thing – everyone needs a different amount.