Many health organizations have advised Americans to reduce their intake of red meat, mostly due to their overindulgence. Frequently eating large portions of high fat meats can be unhealthful.

On the other hand, lean meats in adequate portions contain much needed nutrients, and should be part of an inclusive eating plan. Knowing the facts about meat, poultry and fish can help you make sound choices.

DID YOU KNOW.....

- Meats provide complete protein for fewer calories than plant proteins.
- 1½ cups each of rice & beans 30 grams protein 632 calories
- 3½ oz. beef sirloin 30 grams protein 180 calories
- Meats contain the most highly absorbable form of iron
- Zinc is absorbed best from meals containing meat
- Diets that replace meat with soy and whole grains inhibit the absorption of zinc

Key Nutrients in Meats

**Protein:** is needed for: growth, maintenance and repair of all body cells; to manufacture new blood cells, hormones, enzymes and antibodies; to maintain fluid balance and maintain proper pH of body fluids.

**Iron:** is an important component of blood. It carries oxygen to muscles, organs and other body tissues.

**Zinc:** is essential to good health, and is needed to produce energy and repair body cells. It is involved in maintaining a healthy immune system, healing cuts and wounds, and plays a role in the senses of smell and taste. For teens, zinc is vital for growth and development.

**Vitamin B-12:** is only found in foods of animal origin. It is required to form red blood cells, and is involved in the metabolism of all cells. Without B-12, a person could suffer irreversible nerve damage.

**Vitamin B-6:** is necessary for the manufacture proteins and body chemicals such as insulin, hemoglobin and antibodies.

**Niacin (B-3):** releases energy from carbohydrates and fats, and helps to produce energy.
Results of Missing Nutrients

- Missing important nutrients may cause you to:
  - Feel a lack of energy
  - Experience reduced brain power
  - Not perform your best in sports
  - Feel irritable or down in the dumps
  - Catch colds often
  - Not reach your full adult height (if you’re a teen)
  - Lose hair, lack color in your skin and shine in your hair, and experience many bad hair days!

Nutritional Comparison

Serving sizes 3.5 oz. cooked, unless otherwise specified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD</th>
<th>CALORIES</th>
<th>PROTEIN (grams)</th>
<th>FAT (grams)</th>
<th>IRON (mg)</th>
<th>ZINC (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye round roast beef, lean</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top sirloin, lean</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken breast without skin</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey breast without skin</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder or sole</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, canned in water</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice &amp; Kidney Beans ½ c ea</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5*</td>
<td>0.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>1.5*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not fully absorbed

RDAs
- Iron: ages 8-13: 8 mg; Males 14-18: 11 mg; 19-50: 8 mg; Females 14-18: 15 mg; 19-50: 18 mg.
- Zinc: ages 9-13: 8 mg; Males 14+: 11 mg; Females 14-18: 9 mg; 19+: 8 mg

References:
5) www.cc.nih.gov/ccc.supplements.html accessed 02/22/02.