

# Beef - An Important Food

prepared by: National Livestock and Meat Board

Foods are grouped on the basis of their major nutritional contributions to the diet. Together they add up to the nutrients needed from a variety of foods. These are the protective foods—that should be eaten every day in meals and snacks—to bring out the best in you.

Many foods contain more than one nutrient but no one food contains all the nutrients in the required amounts. Some 40 nutrients are needed daily to assure mental and physical fitness in young and old alike—large amounts of some and traces of others. Thus, the interdependence of the four food groups in supplying the recommended amounts of essential nutrients makes a good food guide to follow for a balanced diet.

Beef is basic to the MEAT GROUP and a prime source of many essential nutrients (2 or more servings per day from this group are recommended). Beef is both high in quality and quantity of protein containing all the essential amino acids necessary to build, maintain and repair body tissues, and strengthen the defense mechanism against infection

and disease. B vitamins help make better use of other nutrients in the food, are essential for good vision and clear eyes, appetite, healthy skin and nervous system.

Minerals are another food component and very much a part of the body cells and fluids. The red blood cells can neither form nor function without iron. Beef is a principal source of iron in available form; the B vitamins—especially niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, B6, B12 and other nutrients. It is one of the most completely digestible and utilized foods. It satisfies. When meat is included in the diet, the dieter is less likely to be irritable, tired, hungry and to overeat between meals. On the average, most beef cuts contain 30 grams of protein, 15 grams of fat, yet less than 265 calories for a 3½ ounce serving as eaten, so that weight watchers can enjoy beef too.

Whatever cut of beef you serve the family, you can be sure of the same outstanding nutritive values.

### Selection

The wide variety of fresh, cured, cured-and-smoked, frozen, freeze-dried, canned and ready-to-serve beef cuts offers almost unlimited selection for the consumer.

In buying fresh chilled or

frozen beef, an important factor to consider is that the retailer stakes his reputation on the beef he sells. Since consistency in quality is essential in today's meat business, it is important to find a retailer who handles the brand, grade, or quality, of beef or beef products you want . . . and who gives you the kind of service you desire.

Fresh chilled beef cuts are available in a wide range of sizes from the individual steak or patty to the wholesale round, which will serve 100 or more persons. Beef cuts vary in tenderness but all can be made tender by proper cooking. This is why it is necessary to select cuts with the cooking method in mind, or to adapt the cooking method to the cut selected.

In buying beef it is necessary to consider not only the size and kind of cut but also the quality of the meat. Young beef may not contain as much fat as beef from a more mature animal, but because of its youth may be more tender. On the other hand, streaks or flecks of fat intermingled throughout the lean in cuts from the more mature animal can add to eating quality. These fat flecks, known as "marbling," are given significance by government graders, packers and retailers in establishing the grade or brand name which will appear on the carcass.

### Care and Storing

FRESH BEEF which is not to be frozen should be stored in the coldest part (temperature as low as possible without actually freezing the meat) of the refrigerator or in the compartment designed for meat storage.

Fresh beef prepackaged for self-service should be stored, unopened, in the refrigerator in the original wrapping not to exceed 2 days, or it may be frozen without rewrapping and stored in the freezer 1 to 2 weeks. For longer freezer storage the original package should be overwrapped with special freezer material.

Fresh beef, not prepackaged, should be removed from the market wrapping paper, wrapped loosely in waxed paper or aluminum foil and refrigerated, as prepackaged meat, not to exceed 2 days.

Ground beef for best eating quality should be cooked within 24 hours or frozen.

CURED BEEF should be stored in its original wrapper in the refrigerator. For best eating quality, storage time should not exceed 1 week.

COOKED BEEF should be wrapped, or covered, and stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator within 1 to 2 hours after cooking. Cooked beef will keep better if left in larger pieces and not cut until ready to use. Covering prevents drying of the meat which has lost some moisture during cooking.

### Freezing and Defrosting

FRESH BEEF: Cuts from the rib, round, sirloin and chuck should be cut into convenient sizes for freezing. Package steaks according to the number of servings needed. Shape ground beef into patties or package in portions for loaves or other dishes. Season ground beef after thawing since the flavor of most seasonings is intensified upon freezer storage. Wrap meat closely and seal tightly in moisture-vapor-proof material, separating individual servings by a double layer of wrapping material. Label packages noting date, cut and weight or number of

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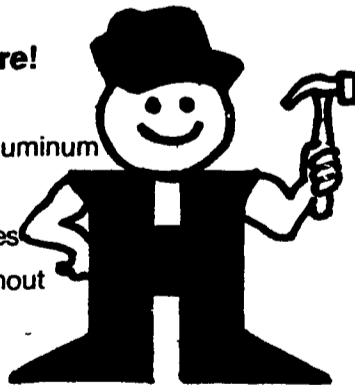
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