

POWER UP WITH PROTEIN

WHAT IS PROTEIN

Protein is one of the three macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates, and fat) that are needed for our body to function. It is built up of amino acids -- some of which our body can produce and others which we can't and need from food. Getting enough protein (and the right kinds) is essential to our health.

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) can take into account your needs, medical history, and more to individualize YOUR protein needs. General population recommendations that are used are about 0.8 g of protein per kg of body weight or about 10-35% of your total calories.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW

VARY YOUR PROTEINS

Mixing up the sources of protein we eat in our diet allows us to catch a wider variety of nutrients and is even being shown to reduce hypertension.

LIMIT PROCESSED & RED MEAT CONSUMPTION

Red meat is a protein source, but for colon cancer risk reduction it is recommended to consume 18 oz per week or less. A good place to start is reducing the more processed sources of red meat such as bacon, prosciutto, cured meats, and deli meats as these are more likely to increase risk.

INCLUDE PLANT-PROTEINS

Often overlooked are plant-based proteins. Foods such as beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, tofu, etc. offer a lot of protein, fiber, and more.

SPACE IT OUT

Spread your protein intake evenly throughout the day to aid in digestion and absorption of the nutrient.

So what should I eat to get enough protein?

Try adding foods you like below to your daily routine:

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YOU CAN EAT BEANS AND LEGUMES

- 1/2 cup cooked lentils will give you about 12 g protein.
 - Lentils go great in soups and stews. You can even make your own Sloppy Joe's using lentils instead of ground beef!
- 1/2 cup black beans provide 8 g protein..
 - Easy to add to salads, tacos, quesadillas, or as a side with rice. You could even try making your own layered bean dip or make your own black bean burgers!
- 1/2 cup chickpeas (garbanzo beans) has 6 g protein.
 - You can mash into a chickpea salad, use as a salad topping, or enjoy some hummus.

YOU CAN EAT NUTS AND SEEDS

- 2 tbsp of peanut butter has about **8 g** protein.
 - Put it in a sandwich, blend into a smoothie, or enjoy with some apples, cinnamon, and whole grain crackers.
- 1/4 cup of pumpkin seeds (pepitas) has about **10 g** protein.
 - Sprinkle on top of avocado or peanut butter toast, add to your favorite trail mix, or add to your morning oatmeal.

YOU CAN EAT ANIMAL PRODUCTS

- A glass of dairy milk contains about 8 g protein per 1 cup.
 - If you are lactose intolerant, soy milk also has about **8 g** protein per 1 cup
- Greek yogurt packs in about **12 g** protein per 1/2 cup.
 - Comes in many flavors, or you can use plain Greek yogurt as a base for higher protein/lower fat dipping sauces.
- Cottage cheese offers **14 g** protein per 1/2 cup.
- 1 large egg has about **6-7 g** protein (about 4 g in the white and 3 g in the yolk..)

YOU CAN EAT MEATS AND FISH

- A 3-oz serving of chicken breast will pack in about **26 g** protein.
 - Make a nutritious plate by adding non-starchy vegetables and whole grains. Or, top on a salad of dark leafy greens and add some plant-based protein toppings as well!
- A 6-oz fillet of salmon will give you about **34 g** protein.
 - Just like with chicken, add a variety of vegetables and whole grains to go with your salmon. If you like seafood, have about 1-2x per week.

DON'T FORGET

Plant proteins offer wide variety of other vital nutrients (fiber, minerals, and vitamins). This can help you reach your fiber goals! Most people get enough protein with their meals. Try focusing on adding a variety of protein foods to your snacks throughout the day!