

Nutrition: Protein



The Facts

Protein is crucial for our immune system, organ function, tissue healing, and muscle and bone mass. As we age, our ability to absorb and use protein declines, leading to bone loss, muscle loss (sarcopenia), and weakness, which may cause falls, fractures, reduced mobility, and may increase risk of infection.

Benefits of Dietary Protein

Protein is vital to maintain and build muscle mass, especially with a strengthening program. It's also essential for bone density as it supplies the building blocks for bone growth and repair.

Eating the right amount of protein is crucial for blood sugar control, as it slows carbohydrate absorption, prevents blood sugar spikes, and serves as an alternative energy source. Studies also show positive links between adequate protein intake and better cognitive function in seniors.

What Can I do?

Aim to eat 1 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram (0.5 to 1 grams per pound) of body weight per day. Protein can come from both animal and plant sources, such as lean meats, poultry, eggs, fish, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, and dairy products.

Single plant sources may not contain all the essential protein building blocks (known as amino acids), so multiple sources of plant proteins should be consumed at a meal. Eat enough non-protein calories so your body does not break down muscle as a source of energy.

Important: Since we can only use 40 grams of protein per meal, divide your protein intake into at least 2-4 separate meals and/or snacks. Try to eat protein with every meal.

Your Weight (kg): _____

Your Daily Protein Goal Range (1 - 1.3 g/kg): _____ to _____ grams

High Protein Foods

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	PROTEIN (g)
Canned Sardines	4 ounces	28 g
Chicken/Turkey breast	4 ounces	28g
Ground beef/turkey	4 ounces	28g
Salmon/Halibut	5 ounces	28g
Boost Protein+	325 ml	27g
Canned tuna	5 ounce can	24g
Seitan	1 cup	21g
Cottage cheese	3/4 cup	18g
Lentils/Black Beans	1 cup cooked	18g
Greek yogurt	3/4 cup	17g
Ensure High Protein	255 ml	16 g
Boost Extra Protein	237 ml	15g
Tofu	4 ounces	12g
Boost Original	237 ml	10g
Deli ham	2 ounces	9g
Ensure Original	255ml	9g
Edamame	1/2 cup	8g
Milk, 2%	1 cup (8 ounces)	8g
Cheddar cheese	1 ounce	7g
Large egg	1 egg	7g
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	7g
Peanuts/Almonds	1/4 cup	7g
Soy milk	1 cup	7g
Quinoa	1/2 cup cooked	6g
Chia seeds	2 tablespoons	5g
Hummus	1/3 cup	5g
Rolled oats	1/2 cup uncooked	5g
Sunflower kernels	1/4 cup	5g
Brown rice	1/2 cup cooked	3g