



From the Food Bank Kitchen

Protein Power

*Protein is a must-have nutrient. Every cell in the human body contains protein. While most Americans eat enough protein, many protein sources like meats and cheeses provide too many calories and saturated fats. Try to substitute healthier choices for some of the red meats you eat. These would include more heart healthy options such as beans, lentils, soy, low-fat dairy, quinoa, nuts, seeds, and seafood. **See the chart below for ideas.***

Role of protein: Your body needs protein to form new cells and repair old ones. Your body turns the building blocks of protein, called amino acids, into enzymes and hormones, which help break down toxins, protect the body against infection and maintain muscle mass. Many people trying to lose weight find that eating higher amounts of protein helps them progress toward their weight loss goals by better controlling their hunger.

Health effects of inadequate protein: Prolonged inadequate protein can result in slower wound healing, impaired immune function, and loss of muscle. Athletes, those recovering from illness or injury, and children have higher protein needs.

Protein needs for adults: It is recommended that the average individual weighing about 150 pounds consume between 60 to 90 grams of protein throughout the day. If you weigh less, then your needs are on the lower end of this range. There are health benefits to eating on the higher end of the range, especially if the protein we eat is evenly spaced. Too much protein can stress the kidneys, increase chances of kidney stones and increase risk of osteoporosis. People with kidney disease often need to limit their protein intake; be sure to check with your health care provider.

Timing of protein intake: It is ideal to spread protein consumption throughout the day, and to eat a similar amount of protein at each meal so the body is able to best use it to build and maintain muscle mass. Blood sugar is also kept more stable and hunger controlled when one aims for a minimum of **20-25 grams** of protein **per meal**. A common pattern in the U.S. is for people to eat 10 grams of protein at breakfast, 15 grams for lunch and 65 grams for dinner. Shift that big protein load from dinner to breakfast and lunch. You can also include a few grams of protein in snacks to satisfy appetite between meals.

Try any of these menu ideas, along with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains:

BREAKFAST: Eat an egg, a piece of toast with a tablespoon of peanut butter and a glass of milk (total 20 gm protein). Other good protein sources for breakfast: almonds or other nuts, yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, nuts, cheese, meatless sausage.

LUNCH: Turkey, ham or tuna sandwich with glass of milk OR a bean, cheese and rice burrito (25-35 grams protein)

DINNER: People eating beef, poultry or pork should try to reduce portion size to 3-4 ounces, the size of the palm of one's hand. Add a glass of milk and you'll be eating 25 to 35 grams of protein. Try to include at least 1 cup of veggies with that.

Protein on your plate

(grams) *Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, Sept 2012*

Lamb (3 oz, braised)	30	Cod/haddock/scrod (3 oz, baked)	16
Beef round steak (3 oz, braised)	29	Pinto/Lima/Black beans (1 cup cooked)	15
Soybeans (1 cup, boiled)	29	Chickpeas /Kidney/Navy beans (1 cup cooked)	15
Ricotta cheese (1 cup, part skim)	28	Yogurt, Greek (6 oz)	14
Cottage cheese (1 cup, low-fat)	28	Tofu (firm, 3 oz)	13
Chicken breast (1/2 breast, 3 oz roasted)	27	Shrimp (3 oz, baked)	12
Pork loin chop (3 oz, pan-fried)	25	Quinoa (1 cup)	8
Turkey (3 oz, light meat, roasted)	25	Almonds (23)	8
Ground beef (85% lean, 3 oz, broiled)	22	Peanuts (30) or Sunflower seeds (1/4 cup)	8
Tuna (3 oz, light, canned in water)	22	Milk, 8 oz (skim, 1%, 2%, whole)	8
Salmon or Tilapia (3 oz, cooked)	22	Peanut butter (2 Tbsp)	7
Ham (3 oz, roasted)	21	Soy milk (8 oz)	7
Sardines (3 oz, canned)	21	Cheese, cheddar (1 oz)	7
White beans (1 cup canned)	19	Egg (1 large)	6
Lentils or split peas (1 cup cooked)	18	Yogurt, regular or light (6 oz) — average	6

Mexican Enchilada Casserole with Black Beans

www.vegetarian.about.com

This Mexican casserole recipe is a one dish vegetarian casserole perfect for busy nights. 8 servings

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| 2 cups chopped onion, fresh or frozen | 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack and Cheddar cheese blend |
| 1 ½ cups chopped red pepper, fresh or frozen | 3 tomatoes chopped (optional) |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | ½ cup light sour cream (optional) |
| ¾ cup salsa (add more to taste) | ½ c sliced black olives (optional) - adds 60 mg sodium per serving |
| 2 tsp ground cumin | |
| 2 (15½ oz) cans unsalted black beans, drained* | Nutrition Facts: Calories 340, Fat 12 gm, Saturated Fat 6 gm, |
| Ten 6--inch corn tortillas | Sodium 250 mg, Carbs 42 gm, Fiber 8 gm, Protein 16 gm |

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine onion, pepper, garlic, salsa, cumin, and black beans in large skillet and bring to simmer over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently for 3 minutes. Arrange 6 tortillas in bottom of 9x13-inch baking dish, overlapping them as necessary. Spread half of bean mixture over tortillas and sprinkle with half of cheese. Repeat layering process with remaining tortillas, bean mixture and cheese. Cover dish with foil and bake 15 minutes. Carefully remove foil and serve warm. Garnish with optional tomatoes, sour cream and olives.

** If using black beans with salt added, it is recommended to rinse the beans in a colander prior to using to lower the sodium content.*

High Protein Smoothie

Source: www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-recipes

Here is a recipe for a protein drink that can be quickly prepared at home. Recipe makes about 3 cups (2 servings).

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| 1 cup (8 oz) fat-free Greek vanilla yogurt | 1 cup 2% reduced fat milk (or soy milk) |
| 1 medium banana, cut into chunks (freeze for thicker texture) | 2 Tbsp wheat germ |
| 2 Tbsp vanilla whey or soy protein powder | 1 cup frozen or fresh berries |

In a blender, combine all ingredients. Blend until smooth. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts per serving: Calories 310, Fat 4 gm, Saturated Fat 2 gm, Sodium 130 mg, Fiber 5 gm, Protein 27 gm

For Seniors Only

Protein is one of the most important nutrients for seniors to consume in adequate amounts. Older adults are more prone to falling short in protein because of illness, debilitating injuries, declining appetites or difficulty eating. Although calorie needs decline with age, protein needs do not. As we get older, we have less protein in our bodies. This can result in slower wound healing, impaired immune function, and loss of muscle. The loss of muscle, in particular, causes weakness, which can lead to increased risk of falls, with possible hip fracture. Consuming enough protein, along with remaining physically active to one's best ability, can slow down progression to a condition of frailty and improve mobility, energy, and quality of life for seniors.

Many seniors have a diagnosis of high blood pressure, with health care providers recommending that sodium intake be limited to less than 1,500 mg per day. Check the Nutrition Facts label of prepared foods to limit sodium, which is often high in canned and processed foods and in soups and meats like ham, bologna, bacon, sausages and hot dogs.

Trouble chewing? Easier to chew protein foods include all soups and stews, baked egg and cheese dishes such as quiche, or frittata, lentil or bean dishes, tuna/salmon/egg salads, cottage and ricotta cheeses, yogurt, tofu, fish, nut butters, and supplements like Boost or Ensure. As Greek yogurt has double the protein of regular yogurt, it may be a better option.

What about eggs?

Eggs are a terrific and inexpensive high quality source of protein. One egg a day, on average, doesn't increase cardiac risk, and only the yolk contains cholesterol and saturated fat. Do not consume raw eggs, or eggs whose shell is not intact.