

Protein Content of Foods

Most people need to eat about 100 grams of protein each day to keep their immune system and muscles strong. The recommended amount may change based on body size, with smaller people needing slightly less than 100 grams, and larger people needing slightly more. Having a medical condition such as kidney or liver trouble may also change your needs. Also, athletes who exercise intensely for more than 8–10 hours each week may have higher needs.

A good general guide for most people is to multiply their weight in pounds by 0.75. So, for a 150# man without medical problems who is active but not an athlete, he should aim to consume about 110 grams of protein each day. ($150 \times 0.75 = 112.5$) A normally active, petite 110# woman should aim for about 80 grams ($110 \times 0.75 = 82.5$). That same woman, with kidney trouble, should seek additional advice about her protein intake from a registered dietitian. Athletes can usually consume up to 1.2–1.5 grams per pound of body weight without difficulty, as long as they do not have other medical problems.

Proteins are the building blocks our bodies use to make muscle and strengthen the immune system, helping to keep us feeling healthy and energetic. Our bodies can only build muscle through fuel (proteins) and exercise. So, even with appropriate dietary protein intake, it is still possible to experience muscle loss when exercise isn't included. Extra protein calories consumed can be turned into fat by the body, which means finding the right balance of protein foods and exercise for you is essential. If your goals include increased muscle mass, don't expect to bulk up merely by eating the right mix of foods. See fact sheet #32 for further information on exercise recommendations

The following are some great sources of protein, including the typical serving size, suggestions for ways to incorporate each source into your daily meal plan and the amount of protein provided.

Fluid Milk, all varieties (suggest low fat 1% or fat-free cow's milk, soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, etc)

1 cup = 8 g protein

Milk can be consumed as a beverage any time of day, used with cereals, puddings, soups and when baking.

Skim Milk Powder (SMP)

1/2 cup = 11 g protein

Add 1/2 c SMP to 1 c fluid milk to make "double strength milk" which can be used as a beverage or in recipes; add to any food or recipe that you usually use regular fluid milk. The powder can also be mixed into sauces, soups, or any other liquid foods for an extra protein kick.

Peanut Butter

2 Tbsp = 7 g protein

Add to milkshakes; spread on celery, apple slices, banana chunks, crackers, bagels, bread, English muffins; mix 1/4 cup peanut butter with 1 cup plain yogurt and 1/3 cup applesauce to make "peanut butter pudding" which can be eaten as is or spread on crackers.

Nuts

1/4 cup = 4–9 g protein

Add to salads, cereal, or stir fried vegetables; mix with dried fruit to make your own trail mix; add to recipes for baked goods such as cookies and muffins; use as a topping for ice cream or pudding.

Protein Content of Foods *continued*

Meat, Chicken, Fish

1 oz (cooked) = 7 g protein

Add chunks of cooked meat, chicken or fish to salads, casseroles, soup, instant noodles or stir fried vegetables.

Legumes

1 cup = 12–19 g protein

Add to salads, soups, casseroles; pureed chickpeas may be used to make a spread.

Eggs

1 egg = 7 g protein

Add cooked eggs to salads, soups, instant noodles; mix with ground meat to make patties or meatballs; add an extra egg in recipes such as pancakes, cookies, muffins, French toast.

Cottage Cheese

1/4 cup = 7 g protein

Mix with fruit such as pineapple and peaches; use as a topping for bagels.

Hard Cheeses

1 oz = 7 g protein

Melt into soups and casseroles; cheese sauce for vegetables; top English muffins with cheese to make mini pizzas; add to salads and sandwiches.

Tofu, Tempeh, or other Meat Alternatives (MA)

Amount varies depending on product specifics

Increased interest in vegetarian diets has led food manufacturers to develop new and interesting MA's. These are often made from soybeans, a naturally complete, high-protein vegetable. They come in a variety of forms and flavors, including hamburger patties, chicken patties, lunch meat, hot dogs, ground beef, and cheese. You may find them in health food stores, specialty import stores, or in your larger local grocery store chains. They are often included either in the frozen aisle or in the produce section. Many of the manufacturers have web sites with coupons, product information and recipes to help you experiment with these versatile and healthy MA's.

You may need a prescription from your medical provider to obtain the last two protein sources

Promod® Protein Supplement

1 scoop = 5 g protein

Add to milk, sauces, gravy, soup, yogurt/fruit shakes, hot cereal, milkshakes, pudding, applesauce or other pureed fruit.

Nutrition Supplements

(e.g. Carnation Instant Breakfast®, Ensure®, Boost®, Resource®, NuBasics®)

1 cup = 9–20 g protein

Add to fruit smoothies, yogurt shakes, milkshakes, hot cereal; use as a creamer for coffee or tea.