

Introduction to Protein

What is Protein?

Understand the basic concept of protein and its importance.

Protein is like a building block for your body. Just like you need bricks to build a house, your body needs protein to build muscles, bones, skin, and other important parts

Types of Protein

Identify which foods contain protein from a list of various foods

Meat: Like chicken, beef, and fish.

Eggs: These are full of protein.

Dairy: Milk, cheese, and yogurt have lots of protein.

Beans and Nuts: These are great plant-based sources of protein.

Tofu: Made from soybeans, it's a good source of protein for vegetarians.

Differentiate between animal and plant-based proteins

Amino Acids:

Animal-Based Proteins: These usually have all the essential amino acids your body needs. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. When a protein has all the essential amino acids, it's called a complete protein.

Plant-Based Proteins: Some plant-based proteins might not have all the essential amino acids, so they are often considered incomplete proteins. However, you can combine different plant foods to get all the amino acids your body needs. For example, eating beans and rice together makes a complete protein.



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Nutrients and Fiber:

Animal-Based Proteins: These are rich in nutrients like vitamin B12, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids. However, they don't have fiber.

Plant-Based Proteins: These are often packed with fiber, vitamins, and minerals, but some important nutrients like vitamin B12 might be missing, so you might need to get those from other sources or supplements.

Health Effects

Animal-Based Proteins

Some types, especially red and processed meats, can be high in saturated fats and cholesterol, which might not be good for heart health if eaten in large amounts.

Plant-Based Proteins

These are typically lower in saturated fats and can be better for heart health. They also contain lots of fiber, which is good for digestion.

How Protein Works in the Body?

Understand how protein helps the body function

Growth and Repair: Protein helps you grow and helps your body repair itself when you get hurt. If you scrape your knee, protein helps it heal.

Energy: Protein can also give your body energy to play and learn.

Staying Strong: Protein keeps your muscles strong so you can run, jump, and play sports.



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Daily Protein Needs

Learn about daily protein requirements.

Determine Your Weight in Kilograms

If your weight is in pounds, divide it by 2.2 to convert to kilograms.

Choose Your Protein Requirement Based on Activity Level

Sedentary (little or no exercise): 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.

Moderately Active (exercises a few times a week): 1.0-1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.

Active (regular, intense exercise): 1.2-1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.

Very Active (athletes or heavy training): 1.4-2.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.

Calculate Your Daily Protein Needs

Multiply your weight in kilograms by the protein requirement based on your activity level.



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Making Healthy Protein Choices

Tips for Choosing Healthy Proteins

Opt for Lean Cuts: Choose meats that are lower in fat.

Watch for Added Sugars and Sodium: Be cautious of processed meats and flavored dairy products.

Include a Variety: Eating different sources of protein ensures you get a range of nutrients.

Mind the Portions: Balance protein intake with other food groups like vegetables, fruits, and whole grains

Discuss healthy vs. unhealthy protein choices (e.g., lean meats vs. processed meats)

Processed Meats: Processed meats are meats that have been preserved or altered through smoking, curing, salting, or adding preservatives.

Examples: Sausages, Hot dogs, Bacon Ham, Deli meats (like salami, bologna, and turkey slices), Canned meats

Nutritional Concerns

Higher in Sodium: Processed meats often contain high levels of sodium due to preservatives and flavorings, which can increase the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.

Higher in Saturated Fats: Many processed meats have added fats, making them higher in saturated fats compared to lean meats.

Additives and Preservatives: They may contain nitrates, nitrites, and other chemicals that can be harmful when consumed in large amounts.



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Health Risks

Increased Risk of Chronic Diseases: Regular consumption of processed meats has been linked to an increased risk of certain cancers (particularly colorectal cancer), heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

Lower Nutritional Value: Processed meats generally have fewer essential nutrients compared to fresh lean meats.

Learn simple ways to incorporate protein into meals.

Breakfast

Add Eggs: Scramble, boil, or make an omelet with eggs. You can also add them to your toast or mix them into oatmeal.

Greek Yogurt: Use Greek yogurt as a base for parfaits with fruit and granola or blend it into smoothies.

Nut Butter: Spread almond or peanut butter on whole-grain toast or mix it into your morning smoothie.

Cottage Cheese: Top with fruit, nuts, or honey for a protein-packed breakfast.

Lunch

Chicken or Turkey: Add grilled chicken or turkey slices to salads, wraps, or sandwiches.

Tuna or Salmon: Make a tuna salad, add canned tuna or salmon to a green salad, or make a sandwich.

Quinoa or Lentils: Use quinoa or lentils as a base for salads or bowls, adding veggies and a dressing.

Hummus: Use hummus as a spread on sandwiches or as a dip for vegetables.



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Dinner

Lean Meats: Include grilled chicken, turkey, or fish as your main protein. Pair with vegetables and a whole grain like brown rice or quinoa.

Beans and Legumes: Make chili, soups, or stews with beans or lentils. Add them to salads or serve as a side dish.

Tofu or Tempeh: Stir-fry tofu or tempeh with vegetables and your favorite sauce. You can also bake or grill them for a hearty meal.

Stir-Fry: Use a variety of proteins like chicken, shrimp, or tofu in a vegetable stir-fry.

Snacks

Hard-Boiled Eggs: Keep hard-boiled eggs in the fridge for a quick and easy snack.

Nuts and Seeds: Have a handful of almonds, walnuts, or sunflower seeds for a protein boost.

Protein Bars: Choose bars with natural ingredients and a good amount of protein.

Edamame: Steam edamame and sprinkle with a little salt for a tasty snack.

Simple Add-Ons

Cheese: Add a slice of cheese to sandwiches or salads, or have string cheese as a snack.

Milk: Use milk in your coffee, tea, or cereal instead of water.

Protein Powder: Add protein powder to smoothies, oatmeal, or baked goods.

Chia Seeds: Sprinkle chia seeds on yogurt, oatmeal, or salads for added protein and fiber.

By including these protein sources in your meals and snacks, you can easily boost your protein intake throughout the day.



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