



GOING LEAN WITH PROTEIN

Some foods with protein are high in saturated fat. Eating too much saturated fat can increase the risk of heart disease or stroke.

To limit saturated fat, it is important to choose lean protein foods. These tips can help:

- ▶ Choose lean cuts of beef, such as loin, sirloin, round, and chuck.
- ▶ Choose ground beef labeled as at least 90% lean.
- ▶ Remove skin from poultry before eating.
- ▶ Trim fat from meats before cooking.
- ▶ Broil, grill, microwave, roast, poach, or boil meats instead of frying.
- ▶ Drain off the fat when browning ground meats.
- ▶ Cook dry beans, peas, and lentils without adding animal fats, like lard or ham hocks.
- ▶ Choose leaner lunch meats, such as turkey, ham, and roast beef. Limit regular bologna or salami.

PROTEIN

What Does Protein Do?

Protein is 1 of 3 main building blocks of food, along with carbohydrate and fat. It plays many important roles in your body:

- ▶ **Protein builds.** Throughout life, you need protein to build cells, tissues, and muscles. Protein is especially important during times of growth (such as infancy, childhood, and pregnancy) and as part of daily life for older adults.
- ▶ **Protein repairs.** Protein helps your body heal cuts and wounds.
- ▶ **Protein protects.** Protein helps your immune system build antibodies that protect you from disease.

Does Eating Extra Protein Make You Stronger?

Eating extra protein does not directly increase the size or strength of your muscles. Exercise strengthens muscles. The amount of protein in a typical diet is usually enough to build cells and tissue. For some athletes who also need more calories, getting slightly more protein may help to build and maintain muscle.

How Much Protein Do You Need?

Here are some general guidelines for the amount of protein that most healthy people need each day. If you have certain medical conditions, you may need more or less protein. Check with your doctor or dietitian to find out how much protein you need.













Recommended daily amounts of protein



























Males 14- to 18-years-old:	52 grams (g)
Males 19-years-old and older:	56 g
Females 14-years old and older:	46 g


For females who are pregnant or breastfeeding

during pregnancy and while breastfeeding: 71 g

Which Foods Have Protein?

Food	Serving	Protein (grams)
Chicken, breast, skinless, boneless, cooked	3 ounces	27.3
Beef, top sirloin, trimmed, broiled	3 ounces	24.7
Pork, top loin roast, boneless, roasted	3 ounces	23.1
Salmon, sockeye, baked	3 ounces	22.5
Hamburger, 85% to 89% lean, cooked	3 ounces	21.2
Whey protein powder	1 scoop (44 grams)	21.0
Tuna, water packed, drained	3 ounces	20.1
Fish, cod, cooked	3 ounces	17.4
Tempeh 	½ cup	16.9
Cottage cheese, 1%	4 ounces	14.0
Yogurt, Greek, fruit, fat-free	6 ounces	13.7
Bagel 	1 medium (105 grams)	11.1
Veggie burger or soy burger, unprepared 	1 patty (70 grams)	11.0
Soy nuts 	1 ounce	10.8
Edamame, shelled, cooked 	½ cup	9.3
Lentils, cooked 	½ cup	8.6
Skim milk	1 cup	8.2
Split peas, cooked 	½ cup	8.1
Whole milk	1 cup	7.7
Black beans, cooked 	½ cup	7.3
Yogurt, fruit, low fat	6 ounces	7.3
Pasta, spaghetti, cooked 	1 cup	7.2
Peanut butter 	2 tbsp	7.1
Almond butter 	2 tbsp	6.7
Kidney beans, cooked 	½ cup	6.7
Cheddar cheese	1 slice (28 grams)	6.5

Food	Serving	Protein (grams)
Chickpeas, cooked 	½ cup	6.3
Soy milk 	1 cup	6.3
Egg	1 large	6.3
Almonds 	1 ounce (22 whole)	6.0
Pinto beans, cooked 	½ cup	6.0
Pistachios, shelled 	1 ounce	6.0
Oatmeal, cooked 	1 cup	5.8
Sunflower seeds 	1 ounce	5.8
Flaxseeds 	1 ounce	5.1
Amaranth grain, cooked 	½ cup	4.7
Chia seeds 	1 ounce	4.7
Whole-wheat bread 	1 slice (36 grams)	4.5
Green peas, cooked 	½ cup	4.3
Walnuts 	1 ounce	4.3
Rice, cooked 	1 cup	4.2
Quinoa, cooked 	½ cup	4.0
American cheese	1 slice (21 grams)	3.6
Wild rice 	½ cup	3.3
Baked potato 	2 × 5 inches	3.1
Bulgur, cooked 	½ cup	2.8
Pecans 	1 ounce	2.6
Hummus, commercial 	2 tbsp	2.3
Spinach, cooked 	½ cup	2.2
Corn, cooked 	½ cup	2.2
Broccoli, chopped,  cooked	½ cup	1.9
Almond milk 	1 cup	1.4
Rice milk 	1 cup	0.7
Coconut milk 	1 cup	0.5

Note: Plant sources are indicated by .

Source: US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. FoodData central, 2019.