

Protein:

Importance of protein in diet

Protein plays many vital roles in maintaining our health this includes maintaining muscle strength, wound healing, making new cells and repairing old. Protein also plays a vital role in making hormones and enzymes which carry out key functions.

Protein requirements

- The amount of protein we need changes in different stages of our lifetime
- Older people may require more protein due to risks of sarcopenia (muscle wasting)
- There may be other factors present which may increase protein requirements, e.g. illnesses and long-term conditions such as cancer, COPD, pressure ulcers and recovery from surgery
- Older people are advised to eat protein as 1-1.5g/kg body weight each day (ESPEN) due to reduced mobility, ageing, reduced immune function and metabolic changes which can impair wound healing and the ability to fight infection
- Protein requirements can be as high as 2g/kg body weight in severe illnesses

**If you have any renal problems (CKD Stage 4 or higher), please check with your GP / renal consultant or dietitian if it is safe to have a high protein diet.*

What are the main sources of protein in diet?

Good sources of protein include: meat, fish, eggs, and dairy foods such as milk, yogurt and cheese. Plant-based sources of protein include: soy and tofu, beans, dahl, pulses, meat alternatives, nuts and seeds.

Ways to increase protein in your diet

- Fill at least a ¼ of your plate with protein foods at every meal
- Try to eat at least 25-30g of protein at each meal. This will help to build and maintain muscles
- Use dairy more frequently, e.g. using milk instead of water in cooking and drinks
- Have a milky dessert such as yogurts / custards after meals
- Add beans, pulses, lentils and peas to casseroles and soups
- Add nuts, ground nuts, nut butter and seeds to salads, pasta, sauces, yoghurt, couscous and porridge
- Try nut butters on toast, muffins, crumpets, waffles and pancakes
- Add milk powder to milk drinks, porridge, mashed potato, sauces, and soups
- Add cheese to your meals, such as mashed potato, sauces, vegetables, salad, scrambled eggs and omelettes
- Look for the “high protein” labels when grocery shopping
- Choose sandwich fillings that are protein-rich, such as ham, chicken, egg and tuna



Protein content of everyday used foods



- Chicken breast 2 slices (80g) = 22g
- 1 egg = 7g
- Lamb chop (90g) = 25g
- Beef mince (140g) = 28g
- White fish eg cod (150g) = 35g
- Tinned tuna in oil (100g drained) = 25g
- Salmon (100g) = 23g
- Cheddar cheese 2 slices (40g) = 10g
- Cow's milk ½ pint = 15g
- Ham (50g) = 9g
- 1 tablespoon (9g) milk powder = 3g
- Yogurt (125g) / 1 pot = 7g
- Soya milk ½ pint = 9g
- Ice cream (75g) = 2.5g
- Rice pudding (200g) = 10g
- Tofu (80g) = 19g
- Quorn (100g) = 13g
- Baked beans 1 small can (150g) = 8g
- Lentils - green 1 tablespoon (40g) = 4g
- Peanut butter 1 portion pack (25g) = 6g
- Roasted peanuts (50g) = 13g
- Dahl (100g) = 10g



High protein meal ideas

Breakfast:

- 2 Eggs: scrambled, poached, fried, omelette with 2 slices cheese
- Porridge made with milk and 1 tablespoon milk powder topped with nut butter and seeds
- Granola or muesli with extra nuts, seeds and yoghurt
- Nut butters on toast
- Beans and cheese on toast
- Bacon or sausage with tomato or beans
- Fresh or tinned fruit with yoghurt, nuts and seeds

Snack time:

- Nuts and seeds
- Yoghurt, especially Greek yogurts & high protein Skyr
- Cheese and biscuits
- Houmous with bread or vegetables
- Small pot of custard can add 1 tablespoon milk powder
- Cereal bar containing nuts and seeds - some are labelled 'high protein'
- Boiled egg or scrambled
- Cubes of ham or other cold meat



Lunch and dinner:

- Include a portion at each meal of meats or plant alternatives, e.g. 1 chicken breast, 1 fish fillet, 3 eggs, 100g mince, 170g tofu, 250g beans, 120g Dahl
- Include a portion of carbohydrate foods e.g. rice, potatoes, maize, pasta, bread, naan bread

Drinks

- 1 pint of milk daily (add milk powder 4 level tablespoons to make fortified milk)
- Milky drinks: hot chocolate, Horlicks, Ovaltine, milkshakes, milky coffee, milky tea
- Yogurt drinks
- Smoothies made with fruit and yogurts

Leaflet given out by _____ Contact number: _____

This leaflet is not suitable for use in someone with a diagnosed unsafe swallow / Dysphagia.