

Maximize the Power of Protein

- Eat high-quality protein foods to help meet your needs throughout the day.
- Include high-quality protein with breakfast. Many people skip this meal altogether!
- Include high-quality protein foods such as milk, cheese, yogurt or whey when planning meals with less meat.
- Get recipes that include protein at wheyprotein.nationaldairycouncil.org and nationaldairycouncil.org.

Protein Basics:

Power Your Plate and Your Lifestyle

Most Americans meet their protein needs. However, some people may benefit from **diets higher in protein** such as **athletes, aging adults** and those trying to **manage their weight**. **Diets higher in protein** have been shown to help slow muscle loss that occurs as you get older. They can help curb hunger and help maintain a healthy weight. High-quality proteins can help build and repair muscles following a hard workout.

What is protein?

Protein is an essential nutrient your body needs each day. The body uses protein to build, repair and maintain muscle and help your body work properly. Not all proteins are equal. Quality can make a difference. High-quality protein provides the essential amino acids your body can't make on its own.

Where can I get protein?

Protein is found naturally in animal foods and some plant foods. However, the amount and quality of protein varies. Dairy foods such as milk, cheese and yogurt are good examples of high-quality protein.* Other high-quality protein foods include eggs, beef, pork, poultry, fish and soy. These foods offer convenient options to help you meet your protein needs.

Protein in Common Foods

For illustration purposes only. Check the nutrition label for product-specific protein content.

	Serving Size	Protein (grams)	Tip
Milk	1 cup	8-10	Choose low-fat or fat-free varieties, including flavored or lactose-free options.
Cheese, such as Cheddar	1.5 oz.	9-11	Choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheese.
Cottage cheese	½ cup	13	Choose low-fat or fat-free varieties.
Greek-style yogurt	6 oz.	14-18	Choose low-fat or fat-free varieties.
Traditional yogurt	6 oz.	5-7	Choose low-fat or fat-free varieties.
Lean beef	3 oz.	22-27	Choose cuts with round or loin in the name, such as sirloin, round tip, tenderloin and top round.
Lean pork	3 oz.	24-26	Choose cuts with loin in the name, such as tenderloin, top loin and Canadian bacon.
Lean poultry	3 oz.	25-26	Choose breast meat, and remove the skin before eating.
Seafood and fresh water fish	3 oz.	18-22	
Eggs	1 large	6	
Beans	½ cup	7-8	Choose beans such as kidney or pinto.
Nuts	1 oz.	6-8	
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp.	8	
Tofu	3 oz.	6	

*Look for products containing 5 grams or more of protein per serving.

