

PROTEIN INFO SHEET

Sources

<https://zoe.com/learn/vegetables-high-in-protein>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/best-sources-protein>

Why do we need protein?

Protein is an essential nutrient, responsible for multiple functions in your body, including building tissue, cells and muscle, as well as making hormones and anti-bodies.

Protein is vital for building and repairing cells throughout your body. It's also crucial for developing muscle, driving chemical reactions, and providing energy.

When you eat protein, your body breaks it down into amino acids. These act as building blocks for new proteins.

Your body needs more than 20 different amino acids. It can build many of these itself, but the other nine are "essential" amino acids, which it needs to get from food.

How much protein should I eat?

For most people, a daily dose of around 0.8-1g of protein per 1kg of body weight is recommended. After exercise, protein is particularly important since muscles need it to recover and grow. A portion of protein within 30 minutes of exercise is helpful as this is when your muscles are particularly receptive to protein synthesis.

One of the main issues with our Western diet is that our breakfasts and lunches are often low in protein but high in carbohydrates, with a protein-packed evening meal. It is better to spread your protein intake throughout the day.

Recipes for high protein meals:

- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/high-protein-breakfast-recipes>
- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/high-protein-lunch-recipes>
- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/high-protein-dinner-recipes>

Good sources of protein

1. Eggs

We love to cook with them, but how much protein is in an egg? One medium egg has around 6g of protein in an easily digestible form. A healthy omelette is a good way to start the day and is a good recovery snack post-exercise, too.

2. Milk

Dairy foods are packed with protein and contain bone-building calcium. Why not try a milk-based fruit smoothie.

3. Dairy - Yogurt

A combination of casein and whey protein, yogurt is a good protein-rich food. Since some of the lactose is removed, it may be a useful option for those people who are lactose intolerant, but check with a healthcare professional if there are any concerns. 200g of Plain Greek yogurt contains 18 g of protein. And in that portion, you'll also get 222 milligrams of calcium. This is important for bone and teeth health, as well as muscle, nerve, and heart function.

If you eat dairy, cottage cheese can be a great way to get some protein, with 14 g in a 4-ounce portion (113 g).

Try adding eating it with fruit, making a dip, adding it to pasta, mixing it into baked good recipes, or enjoying it on its own.

4. Fish and seafood

Fish and seafood are good sources of protein, and are typically low in fat. While slightly higher in fat than other varieties, salmon packs in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce joint stiffness and inflammation.

5. Chicken and turkey

Opt for lean protein from white meat poultry, such as chicken and turkey.

6. Soya

For people who may be dairy intolerant, eating soya protein foods, such as fortified tofu and soya-based drink is an alternative to animal based proteins. Plus, they can help lower cholesterol and may reduce the risk of heart disease.

7. Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds are a practical protein choice if you're on the move. Around 50 pistachio nuts provide 6g of protein plus sodium and potassium – the electrolytes lost through sweat during exercise. Sprinkle nuts and seeds on yogurts or make your own granola for healthy breakfast or snack alternatives!

A single ounce of pumpkin seeds contains over 8 g of protein. These seeds also provide phosphorus, vitamin K, and healthy fats. And they're a great source of magnesium.

The kernels from 1 oz (28 g) of whole sunflower seeds contain about 6 g of protein and 2 g of fiber.

Sunflower seeds are also a good source of polyunsaturated fat, the healthy fat that may boost cholesterol levels and heart health. Try using them in pesto, sprinkling them on salad, or having them as a snack.

A cup of wild rice contains about 6 g of protein, plus manganese, zinc, magnesium, and vitamin B6

8. Pork

Meat supplies branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs), which are key in supporting muscle recovery. Leucine in particular makes up a third of muscle protein and helps stimulate repair after exercise. Pork is one of the richest sources of leucine, and therefore a great addition to a post-exercise meal or snack. Eggs, chicken and lean beef also provide good amounts of leucine.

9. Lentils, Beans and pulses

Lentils come in a variety of colours and are packed with protein. Approx 18g of protein per cooked cup (198g). Lentils are also rich in fiber, help promote a healthy gut, lower cholesterol, improve heart health and control blood sugar. Beans and pulses are great, cheap protein sources. They're also a useful plant source of iron and are rich in fibre. Black beans = 15g protein per 262g cup, Kidney beans 13g of protein

10. Tofu and tempeh

Both tempeh and tofu are made from soy beans; however, tempeh requires the additional step of fermentation, providing it with an extra depth of flavour. Tempeh also offers a higher protein and fibre content, while tofu is slightly lower in fat and calories. Tofu contains around 15 g of protein per quarter block (122 g). It's also a good source of calcium and iron.

11. Vegetables (Source: www.Zoe.com)

Some vegetables provide a good amount of protein. So, having a well-rounded diet full of high-quality, protein-packed, nutrient-dense veggies can meet your protein needs.

Vegetable	Protein	Other nutritional benefits	How to eat them
Leafy greens	5.15g protein per 190g cup serving	Contains folate, calcium, fiber, beta-carotene and vitamin C	Raw in a salad, simmered as a side, add to soups, casseroles or smoothies
Sweetcorn	4.74g protein per 145-g cup serving	Vitamins A, B, E, K, magnesium, potassium and fiber	Corn is great right off the cob. It can also sweeten up salads, vegetable dishes, BBQ side plates, fritters, stir-fries, and soups.
Broccoli	Boiled, drained unsalted broccoli provides 4.28g protein per medium stalk serving	Vitamin C, folate, fiber	Steam, or have raw or roasted in salads, dips, pasta dishes, stir fries or soups.

Mushrooms	Cooked white mushrooms offer 3.38g of protein per 156g cup serving	In general mushrooms give us good amounts of B vitamins, selenium, copper, potassium, fiber	Great in all sorts of dishes including omelettes, stir fries, pies, casseroles, stuffed and in soups.
Kale	Boiled Kale provides 3.47g of protein per 118g cup serving	Calcium, selenium, vitamins K, A, E, C, iron, fiber, good for eye health	Add to salads, lightly fried, seasoned as chips, blend into smoothies
Swiss Chard	3.29g of protein per 175g cup serving	Calcium, selenium, vitamins K, A, E, C, iron, fiber, magnesium, phosphorus	Eat raw in salads, braised or oiled in soups, casseroled, omelettes, tarts.
Potatoes	Baked potatoes with the flesh and skin intact – 4.3g of protein per medium potato	Vitamin C, folate, iron, potassium, fiber	Baking in an oven. Boiling potato can remove water soluble nutrients, and removing the skin takes away a good source of insoluble fiber.

Tips

Be mindful of meat alternatives, which aren't always necessarily healthy. While many do contain protein, it's important to check the labels for very high levels of salt and for other ingredients like additives.