

Protein: How Much You Need and Where to Get It

Protein needs

Protein helps:

- Build and maintain bones, muscles and skin
- Heal wounds
- Promote growth

The amount of protein you need depends on your age, body size, activity level and state of health. Protein needs are higher after surgery, with some health conditions like cancer and for very athletic people. **Talk to your dietitian or doctor about your protein needs.** Most Americans eat more protein than they need each day. The current protein recommendation for most healthy adults is **0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight** per day.

To figure out the amount of protein for a 150-pound person:

1. Take the weight in pounds (lb) and divide it by 2.2 to get weight in kilograms (kg):

$$150 \text{ lb} / 2.2 = 68.2 \text{ kg}$$

2. Take the weight in kilograms and multiply it by 0.8 grams (g) of protein:

$$68.2 \text{ kg} \times 0.8 \text{ g} = 54.6 \text{ g of protein per day}$$

I need _____ grams of protein per day.

Protein content in foods and supplements

Each food group listed contains different amounts of protein per serving.

You may eat more than the serving listed. For example, if you eat 3 ounces (3 servings) of meat, you would multiply 7 grams of protein by 3 ounces of meat to get 21 grams of total protein.

Talk to your dietitian or doctor about the best protein choices for you.

Meat and Meat Substitute Group			
7 grams of protein per serving			
Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Bean dip	½ cup	Clams	5 small or 2 large
Beans, cooked	½ cup	Edamame	½ cup
Cheese	1 ounce	Egg or tuna salad	1/4 cup
Chicken, tuna, or turkey casserole	⅓ cup	Eggs	1 medium



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Meat and Meat Substitute Group (continued)

7 grams of protein per serving

Fish, cooked	1 ounce	Oysters	4 medium
Hummus	½ cup	Peanut butter	2 tablespoons
Lunch meat	1 ounce	Shrimp or scallops	4 medium
Meatloaf	1 medium slice	Tofu	⅓ cup
Meats (beef, veal, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, duck, goose, ham, organ meats)	1 ounce or ¼ cup	Tuna or salmon, canned	¼ cup
Nuts	¼ cup		

Milk Group

4 grams of protein per serving

Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Cottage cheese	¼ cup	Ice cream	½ cup
Cream (coffee cream, half and half)	½ cup	Milk (whole, 2%, fat free skim, buttermilk, chocolate flavored)	½ cup
Cream-based soup made with milk	¾ cup	Pudding and custard	1 cup
Cream-based soup made with water	2 cups	Yogurt	½ cup
Greek yogurt	¼ cup		

Starch Group

3 grams of protein per serving

Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Ancient grains, cooked (quinoa, barley, farro, kamut)	½ cup	Crackers	6 small
Bagel, 3-inch diameter	½ bagel	Pancakes, waffles	1, 4-inch diameter
Biscuit	1 small	Pasta, cooked	½ cup
Bread, whole wheat	1 slice	Rice, cooked	½ cup
Bun (hamburger or hot dog)	½ bun	Roll	1 small
Cake (angel food)	1/12 of cake	Stuffing	½ cup
Cereals, hot	½ cup	Taco shell, tortilla	1, 6-inch shell
Cornbread	2-inch cube		

Vegetable Group			
2 grams of protein per serving			
Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Cooked vegetables	½ cup	Mashed potatoes	½ cup
Fresh vegetables	½ cup diced	Raw leafy vegetables	2 cups
Fruit Group			
0.5 grams of protein per serving			
Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Canned fruit	½ cup	Juice	½ cup
Fresh fruit	1 medium	Raisins	2 tablespoons
Fat Group			
Less than 1 gram of protein per serving			
Food	Serving Size	Food	Serving Size
Cream cheese	1 tablespoon	Sour cream	2 tablespoons
Gravy	2 tablespoons	Vegetable oil, shortening	1 tablespoon
Margarine	1 tablespoon	Whipped topping	3 tablespoons
Salad dressing	1 tablespoon		
Oral Supplements			
Grams (g) of protein listed with each product			
Product	8-ounce serving (1 bottle)	Product	8-ounce serving (1 bottle)
Boost Compact	10 g	Carnation Breakfast Essentials Light Start (dry packet mixed with 8 ounces of milk)	13 g
Boost Glucose Control	16 g	Ensure Clear	8 g
Boost High Protein	15 g	Ensure Enlive	20 g
Boost Original	10 g	Ensure High Protein	16 g
Boost Plus	14 g	Ensure Original	9 g
Boost VHC (Very High Calorie)	22 g	Ensure Plus	13 g
Carnation Breakfast Essentials (dry packet mixed with 8 ounces of milk)	13 g	Glucerna Shake	10 g

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.