

Quick Nutrition Check for Protein

Protein is found in many foods and is needed to keep you healthy. Your body uses protein to:

- ▮ Provide building blocks for growth and for repairing cells like those in your muscles, skin, and nails.
- ▮ Make enzymes and hormones, which carry out key body functions.

Protein is found in peas, beans and lentils, nuts and seeds and their butters, soy products like tofu and soy beverage, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, and yogurt. Grains, vegetables, and fruit also add small amounts of protein to your diet. Eating protein from a wide variety of food sources will help you meet your needs for nutrients like iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and calcium.

Plan your meals based on Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca>

- ▮ Include protein at all your meals.
 - ▮ Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with protein foods
- ▮ Choose plant-based protein foods more often

This resource will help you to check if you get enough protein in your diet.



Steps you can take

1. Find out how much protein you need

Most adults over 19 years of age need about 0.8 grams (g) of protein per kilogram (kg) of body weight. You can use the following equations to calculate your protein needs.

Step 1: Weight in pounds (lbs) ÷ 2.2 = weight in kg
 Step 2: Weight in kg × 0.8 = Average Daily Protein Need (g)

Note: 1 kg = 2.2 lbs

An adult who weighs 80 kg (176 lbs) needs about 64 g of protein each day, while an adult who weighs 65 kg (143 lbs) needs about 52 g of protein each day.

The following groups have different protein needs than what is recommended above:

- | children and youth
- | pregnant and breastfeeding women
- | some athletes
- | people with certain health conditions

Talk to a registered dietitian to help determine the amount of protein that's right for you.

2. Find out how much protein you eat

To estimate the amount of protein in your diet, keep a food record for one or two days. Record what and how much you eat and drink. Then, add up the protein in your diet using the amounts in foods listed below. The amount of protein in foods can also be found on food labels.

Food	Portion	Protein (g) (approximate)
Meat, fish or poultry, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz) / 125 mL (½ cup)	21
Pumpkin seeds	60 mL (¼ cup)	17
Yogurt, Greek style	175 mL (¾ cup)	14
Cottage cheese	125 mL (½ cup)	13
Hemp seeds	60mL (¼ cup)	13
Firm tofu	150 g / 175 mL (¾ cup)	12

Beans, peas or lentils, cooked	175 mL ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)	12
Egg, chicken	2 large	12
Cheese	50 g (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz)	12
Cow's milk	250 mL (1 cup)	9
Peanuts	60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	9
Peanut butter (natural)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	8
Almonds	60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	8
Almond butter (plain)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	7
Yogurt	175 mL ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)	7
Fortified soy beverage	250 mL (1 cup)	7
Sunflower seeds	60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	7
Sunflower seed butter (plain)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	6
Walnuts	60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	5
Cashews	60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	5
Cashew butter (plain)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	4
Bread	1 slice (35 g)	4
Pasta, cooked	125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	4
Quinoa, cooked	125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	4
Cereals, hot	175 mL ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)	2 to 4
Cereals, cold	30 g	3
Rice, cooked	125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	3
Fortified plant-based beverages (almond, cashew, rice)	250 mL (1 cup)	1

Vegetables	125 mL (½ cup) or 250 mL (1 cup) lettuce	1
Fruit	1 fruit or 125 mL (½ cup)	1

Source: Canadian Nutrient File, 2015.

Special Considerations

Most people do not need protein powder. If you find it hard to get enough protein from food, protein powder may be helpful.

Protein powders are often dairy (for example whey or casein) or plant (such as soy or pea) based. In general, choose a simple protein powder with no extra ingredients such as sweeteners, vitamins, minerals or herbal products.

Protein powders often provide 10 to 30 grams of protein per serving. Scoop size may vary between products. Check the nutrition facts table on the label to find out how much protein the product contains.



Additional Resources

For information and advice based on your specific food and nutrition needs and preferences, call 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a HealthLink BC dietitian.

For additional information, see the following resources:

- ▮ HealthLink BC www.healthlinkbc.ca – Get medically approved non-emergency health information.
- ▮ Dietitian Services Fact Sheets - Available by mail (call 8-1-1) or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating
 - ▮ Quick Nutrition Check for Protein: Sample Menus www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/protein-sample-menus
- ▮ Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

- Canadian Nutrient File <https://food-nutrition.canada.ca/cnf-fce/index-eng.jsp>

These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.



Notes

Distributed by:

Dietitian Services at HealthLinkBC (formerly Dial-A-Dietitian), providing free nutrition information and resources for BC residents and health professionals. Go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating or call 8-1-1 (anywhere in BC). Interpreters are available in over 130 languages.