

Adding Protein to Your Diet

Protein is necessary for building and repairing body tissues. You should strive to have at least one serving of protein-rich food at each meal and snack. The table below lists examples of protein-rich foods. Also included is an estimated amount of protein per serving and suggestions for incorporating these foods into your diet. The protein content of foods varies among brands. It is important to read the nutrition facts label located on packaged foods which provides the most accurate information.

Abbreviations: gm = grams; pro = protein

Food Group	Amount of Protein (Pro)	Serving Suggestion
*Meats/Meat Substitutes Cooked meats, poultry and fish Soy products, tofu, convenience soy-based products ("crumbles", etc.)	7 gm pro per 1 ounce 7-10 gm pro per ½ cup	Add to soups, casseroles, salads and omelets. Trim visible fat from meat to reduce saturated fat. Add chopped or ground soy to vegetable dishes, soups, tacos, lasagna, pasta, stir-fry or casseroles. Tofu can be marinated for extra flavor and sliced and used on sandwiches.
Egg Products *Eggs (whole) Eggs (white) Egg substitute or pasteurized liquid egg whites	7 gm pro per medium egg 4 gm pro per large egg 6 gm pro per ¼ cup	Add chopped hard boiled eggs to salads, dressings, casseroles, soups, sandwich spreads, creamed meats and vegetable, or made into egg salad. Add extra eggs to quiche, omelets, custards, pancakes and French toast batter. Beaten eggs can be added to sauces.
*Milk and Milk Products Milk (May be a significant source of saturated fat)	8 gm pro per cup	Drink plain or add flavored syrup. Instead of water, add to soups, hot cereals or smoothies. Choose skim or low-fat milk to reduce saturated

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Cheese	7 gm pro per ounce	fat. Add to sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, sauces, soups, mashed potatoes, casseroles, pastas and on top of toast or crackers. Choose low-fat cheeses to reduce saturated fat.
Yogurt	5-12 gm pro per cup	Mix with fruit or granola; add to milkshakes, fruit smoothies and gelatin. Use plain yogurt as a topping for potatoes.
Cottage cheese	14 gm pro per ½ cup	Mix with fruit or granola, add to gelatin, pudding, casseroles or egg dishes like quiche and soufflés. Choose low-fat varieties to reduce saturated fat.
Non-fat dry milk powder	8 gm pro per 1/3 cup	Add to regular milk and milk drinks, such as eggnogs and milkshakes. Use it when baking and mix it in with recipes for macaroni and cheese, meatloaf, breads, muffins, gravies and sauces, cream soups, mashed potatoes, puddings, custards, and desserts.
Low lactose milk and milk products	8 gm pro per cup	Lactase drops are available to add to regular milk products if low lactose milk is not available
Plant Sources Nuts and seeds	10 gm pro per ½ cup	Can be ground or added whole to ice cream, muffins, milkshakes, yogurt, pudding, breads, pancakes, waffles, cookies, meatloaf, vegetable dishes and salads.
Peanut butter/ other nut butters (almond butter, cashew butter)	7 gm pro per 2 Tablespoons	Spread on bread, crackers, waffles, pancakes or raw fruits or

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Starchy beans	7 gm pro per ½ cup cooked	<p>vegetables such as apples, celery, jicama or bok choy. Blend nut butters with milkshakes.</p> <p>These include green peas, pinto beans, lima beans, chick peas, kidney or red beans, navy beans, black beans and black eyed peas. Starchy beans can be mashed and made into sides like refried beans. Avoid cooking beans with added fat. Green beans are not starchy beans and contain only trace amounts of protein.</p>
Beverages Pre-mixed nutritional supplements	8-15 gm pro per 8 ounces	Nutritional supplement drinks can be used to substitute milk in milkshakes, puddings and custards. Most pre-mixed nutritional supplements are lactose free, but always check the label.
Instant breakfast powder	5 gm pro per packet	<p>Prepare with milk or sprinkle over ice cream or into a milkshake. Instant breakfast powder can be found in the cold cereal aisle. Instant breakfast powder usually contains lactose.</p>
Energy or protein bars	8 to 20 gm pro per bar	<p>Snack bars, energy bars and meal replacement bars contain varying amounts of protein and calories. Check the label for specific information and check for products with hydrogenated oils in the ingredient label (trans fat).</p>

*May be a significant source of saturated fat.

If you have any questions about your diet, talk with your registered dietitian at the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

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