

National Nutrition Month - All about Protein

Mar 2022 Newsletter - Senior Nutrition Program
by Lucille Tang, RDN



WHAT IS "PROTEIN" AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

If... *Carbohydrates* are used for energy and *Fats* are created for storage, Then, *Proteins* are used for functions.

These functions include...

- Building muscle
- Creating hormones
- Balancing fluid in your blood
- Healing injuries and wounds
- Supplying energy - especially if fasting or in "starvation state"

Our bodies cannot store protein so you need to eat it every day, throughout the day! If your diet is 100% protein, any extra is used as energy or stored as fat.

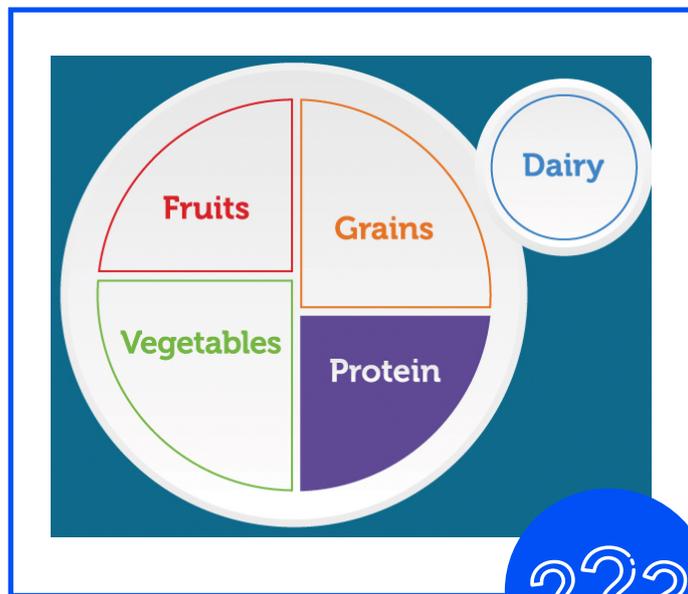


HOW MUCH DAILY "PROTEIN" DO I NEED?

Your protein needs depend on your body weight.

For Older Adults, the general recommendation is 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. However, research has shown that increasing the recommendation to 1.0-1.3 g Protein/kg of body weight has helped older adults prevent muscle loss and maintain function.

Without a calculator, most older adults need about 100g of Protein per day. More if you weigh more and less if you weigh less.



IS "PROTEIN" A FOOD GROUP OR NUTRIENT?

MyPlate (above) features five food groups - Fruits, Vegetables, Dairy, Grains, and *Protein*. You'll notice, the "Protein Group" isn't actually the name of food but a category of foods that provide a nutrient.

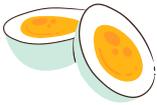


WHERE DOES "PROTEIN" COME FROM?

Protein can be found in *most foods* in varying amounts. There are two major categories of protein foods.

Animal Based

- Meats - Beef, Pork, Venison
- Poultry - Chicken, Duck
- Fish - Salmon, Tuna, Pollock
- Shellfish - Clams, Mussels, Shrimp
- Dairy - Milk, Yogurt, Cheese
- Eggs



Plant Based

- Soy - Tofu, Tempeh
- Nuts - Almonds, Peanuts, Cashews
- Seeds - Sunflower, Pumpkin
- Beans - Black, Kidney, Lima
- Peas - Chickpeas, Split Peas



Whenever possible, vary your proteins and choose lean proteins or seafood, which are also high in essential Omega 3 fatty acids.

HOW CAN VEGANS AND VEGETARIANS SURVIVE WITHOUT "PROTEIN"?

Again, proteins can be found in most foods. And as always, it's about quantity and variety.

Healthy vegans and vegetarians choose a variety of proteins from plant-based sources and eat enough to support function and health.

MEAL PATTERNS & PROTEIN

Our bodies need time to process what we eat. Meaning, if we eat 100g of protein all at once, some will be converted to energy or stored as fat.

To protect your muscles, it's important to exercise regularly and eat protein throughout the day. See below for a sample plan, where protein is eaten every 3 hours.

Sample Meal Plan

<u>Time</u>	<u>Meal</u>	<u>Protein</u>	<u>Example Meals</u>
9 AM	Breakfast	20g	Two <u>Eggs</u> , Two Slices Toast, Fruit
12 PM	Lunch	30g	Senior Nutrition Program Meal
3 PM	Snack	20g	1c Yogurt w/ Nuts/Seeds and/or Fruit
6 PM	Dinner	30g	3 oz of any protein w/ veggies



Seeking help on protein needs or meal planning? Reach out for Nutrition Counseling and Education by OFA Nutritionist Lucille Tang at (585)-991-5463