

# Meet your protein needs

Protein is an essential nutrient necessary for growth and for the body to function properly. Every single cell in your body contains protein.

Eating enough protein ensures your body has all the building blocks it needs to keep you strong and healthy. But, how much is enough? Too little protein puts you at risk for a deficiency, and too much protein may create an imbalance in your diet.

## CALCULATE YOUR NEEDS

The amount of protein you need depends on your height, weight, sex, age, and activity level. In addition, there are certain times of life when protein needs are higher. Children, teens, pregnant women, and anyone healing from an injury require extra protein for growth and repair.

The average, healthy adult can use this formula to determine their baseline protein needs.

- Divide your body weight in pounds by 2.2 (this converts it to kilograms).
- Multiply that number by 0.8 -1.
- This number range gives you a rough estimate of your daily protein needs.

## EAT A VARIETY

Protein is made up of amino acids, the building blocks your body uses to create the specific proteins each cell requires. Different foods contain different amino acids, so eating a variety of protein-containing foods will ensure you get all the amino acids your body needs.

In particular, if you eat a vegetarian or vegan diet, aim to consume as many different protein sources as possible.



## HIGH PROTEIN FOODS

It's easy to meet your protein needs if you choose a serving of protein-containing food at each meal and some snacks each day.

High-protein food	Serving size	Amount of protein
Meat (beef, chicken, fish, etc.)	3 ounces	~21 grams
Eggs	1 egg	7 grams
Dairy products: milk	1 cup	6-8 grams
Dairy products: cheese	1 ounce	6-8 grams
Soy products (tofu, tempeh, etc.)	¼ cup	7 grams
Beans, peas, lentils (cooked)	½ cup	7 grams
Whole grains (cooked)	1 cup	6-10 grams
Nuts and seeds	1 ounce	4-9 grams