

Adding Protein to Your Diet

Your body needs protein to build and maintain muscle, heal tissue, and for a healthy immune system.

Some illnesses and treatments can affect your appetite. You may be eating less and not meeting your protein needs. This can cause you to lose muscle strength and weight.

Eating foods high in protein can help you meet your protein needs and maintain your strength.

How much protein do I need?

By eating a balanced diet according to [Canada's Food Guide](#), most healthy people get enough protein to meet their needs.

You may have higher protein needs if you are ill, are receiving treatment for cancer, have a chronic illness, or are recovering from surgery.

Your daily protein needs

You need _____ grams of protein per day.

Tips to get enough protein

- Choose extra servings of foods high in protein using foods from the Meat and Alternatives and Milk and Alternatives food groups on [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- Eat 5–6 times per day and include foods high in protein with all your meals and snacks. Refer to the list of foods high in protein on the next page.
- Add soy protein, whey protein, or milk powder to hot cereals, soups, puddings, mashed potatoes, pasta sauces, and muffins.
- Melt cheese into soups, sauces, scrambled eggs, and casseroles.
- Add nuts, hemp seed hearts, flax seed, and wheat germ to cereals or yogurt.

- Puree lentils and add to soups, stews, and sauces.
- Make and drink blender shakes with ice cream, milk, Greek yogurt, and pasteurized eggs.
- Talk to your dietitian about other ways to increase the protein in your diet.

Monitor your weight

- Weigh yourself each week, and write it down.
- If you keep losing weight or can't eat enough protein, ask to see a dietitian.

Read food labels

The Nutrition Facts table on the food label shows you the serving size and the amount of protein in each serving.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Per $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 g) | |
| Amount | % Daily Value |
| Calories 160 | |
| Fat 2.5 g | 4 % |
| Saturated 1.5 g + Trans 0 g | 10 % |
| Cholesterol 10 mg | |
| Sodium 75 mg | 3 % |
| Carbohydrate 25 g | 8 % |
| Fibre 3 g | 8 % |
| Sugars 15 g | |
| Protein 8 g | |
| Vitamin A | 2 % |
| Vitamin C | 0 % |
| Calcium | 25 % |
| Iron | 6 % |

Check the serving size and the protein content.

Compare same types of foods and choose those higher in protein.

Choose foods from the table below to help increase the protein in your diet.

| *Food Group | Food | Serving Size | **Protein (g) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Meat and Alternatives  | Beans, canned or cooked | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 9–11 |
| | Beef or pork, cooked | 2½ oz (75 g) | 21–28 |
| | Chicken or turkey, cooked | 2½ oz (75 g) | 17–22 |
| | Chickpeas, canned, cooked or hummus | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 9–11 |
| | Eggs, large | 2 | 12 |
| | Eggs, pasteurized, whites or whole | 6 Tbsp (90 mL) | 10–12 |
| | Fish, cooked or canned | 2½ oz (75 g) | 11–19 |
| | Lentils, canned or cooked | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 13 |
| | Nuts and seeds | ¼ cup (60 mL) | 5–8 |
| | Peanut butter | 2 Tbsp (30 mL) | 7 |
| | Soy burger patty | 1 patty (2 oz or 70 g) | 10 |
| | Tofu, firm | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 10–17 |
| Milk and Alternatives  | Cheese, block (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, feta) | 1½ oz (50 g) | 10–12 |
| | Cheese (goat) | 1½ oz (50 g) | 9–15 |
| | Cottage cheese | 1 cup (250 mL) | 28–30 |
| | Fortified soy beverage | 1 cup (250 mL) | 7 |
| | Milk | 1 cup (250 mL) | 9 |
| | Milk powder | ⅓ cup (75 mL or 25 g) | 9 |
| | Yogurt (Greek, plain and flavoured) | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 14–18 |
| | Yogurt (regular, plain and flavoured) | ¾ cup (175 mL) | 6–8 |
| Grain Products  | Bread | 1 slice (35 g) | 3–6 |
| | Cooked cereal (oat bran, mixed grain, rolled oats) | ¾ cup (175 mL or 150 g) | 4–6 |
| | Cold cereal (labelled as high protein) (Read label for serving size) | 30 g (⅛–¾ cup) (30–175 mL) | 5–7 |
| | Granola protein bars (labelled as high protein) | 1 bar (40–50 g) | 10 |
| | Pasta (protein-fortified), cooked | ½ cup (125 mL) | 5–6 |
| | Quinoa, cooked | ½ cup (125 mL) | 3–4 |
| | Nutrition Supplements and Other Foods  | Ground flax seed | 3 Tbsp (45 mL) |
| Hemp seed hearts | | ¼ cup (60 mL) | 15 |
| Nutrition supplement drinks | | 1 cup (250 mL) | 9–20 |
| Nutrition supplement puddings | | ¾ cup (110–142 g) | 4–7 |
| Protein bars | | 1 bar (50–80 g) | 10–20 |
| Soy protein powder | | 2 Tbsp (30 mL) | 9–12 |
| Wheat germ | | 3 Tbsp (45 mL) | 6 |
| Whey protein powder | | 2 Tbsp (30 mL) | 10 |

*The Vegetables and Fruit group on Canada's Food Guide contains only small amounts of protein and is not included here.

**Amount of protein per serving varies depending on the brand.