



# Your Protein Needs

This handout gives the protein content of various foods and supplements. It is important to eat high-quality protein when your body is healing.

These are guidelines only. It is best to talk about your specific dietary needs with a dietitian or diet technician.

You will need to eat \_\_\_\_\_ servings of protein daily. This equals \_\_\_\_\_ grams of high-quality protein each day.

Protein is found in many different foods, but it is important to include **high-quality** protein in your diet to meet your protein needs. High-quality protein comes from meat, poultry, fish, dairy, or soy products.

## High-Quality Protein Foods

Some high-quality protein foods are listed in the tables below and on the next page. Each item is equal to 1 serving (7 grams) of protein.

| Protein Food                             | Amount in 1 Serving         |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Fish, poultry, or lean meat, cooked      | 1 oz.                       |
| Tuna or salmon, canned, light            | ¼ cup                       |
| White or albacore tuna                   | ⅛ cup                       |
| Shrimp, lobster, crab, clam, or scallops | 2 oz.                       |
| Oysters                                  | 6 medium                    |
| Hard cheese, such as cheddar             | 1 oz.                       |
| Parmesan cheese                          | 3 tablespoons               |
| Feta cheese                              | 2 oz.                       |
| Ricotta cheese                           | ¼ cup                       |
| Cottage cheese, low-fat                  | ¼ cup                       |
| Hummus                                   | ⅓ cup                       |
| Split peas or beans, cooked              | ½ cup                       |
| Tofu, firm                               | 3 oz.                       |
| Tofu, soft                               | 6 oz.                       |
| Edamame (green soybeans)                 | ⅓ cup                       |
| Egg                                      | 1 whole egg or 2 egg whites |
| Egg substitute                           | ¼ cup                       |

| <b>Protein Food</b>     | <b>Amount in 1 Serving</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yogurt, low-fat, plain  | 6 oz. to 8 oz.             |
| Yogurt, Greek           | 3 oz.                      |
| Milk, nonfat, 1%, or 2% | 1 cup                      |
| Soy milk, fortified     | 1 cup                      |
| Dry powdered milk       | $\frac{1}{3}$ cup          |
| Ice cream               | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups       |
| Custard                 | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup          |
| Pudding                 | 1 cup                      |
| Almonds                 | 1 oz. (24 nuts)            |
| Nuts, other             | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.        |
| Pumpkin seeds           | 1 oz.                      |
| Sunflower seeds         | 1 oz.                      |
| Pine nuts               | 2 oz.                      |
| Peanut butter           | 2 tablespoons              |

## **Protein Supplements**

There are many different protein supplements available, ranging from powders, to liquids, to bars. Remember to read the labels to see how many grams of protein are in 1 serving.

For example, 1 serving of a whey-based protein powder may provide 23 grams of protein, or about 3 protein servings.

Different types of protein powders include:

- Soy-based
- Whey-based
- Soy/whey blend
- Egg-based
- Egg/milk blend
- Rice-based

## **Protein Servings in Cooked Foods and Supplements**

Use the list of cooked foods and supplements on the next page to help you figure out your protein intake. A serving of meat the size of a deck of cards is about **3 ounces** and counts as **3 protein servings**. Try not to eat large portions of protein at 1 meal. Instead, eat smaller amounts of protein at every meal.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Your Dietitian or Diet Technician:

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

| Protein Source                           | Serving Size              | Protein Servings |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Whole Foods</b>                       |                           |                  |
| Lean steak                               | 3 inches by 4 inches      | 4                |
| Hamburger                                | 1 average patty           | 3                |
| Pork chop                                | Average                   | 3                |
| Chicken breast                           | ½ small                   | 3                |
| Fish fillet                              | 3 inches by 3 inches      | 3                |
| Chili (meat and beans)                   | 1 cup                     | 3                |
| Chicken thigh                            | 1                         | 2                |
| Macaroni and cheese                      | 1 cup                     | ½                |
| <b>Supplements</b>                       |                           |                  |
| Boost                                    | 8 oz.                     | 1½               |
| Boost High Protein                       | 8 oz.                     | 2                |
| Boost Plus                               | 8 oz.                     | 2                |
| Carnation Instant Breakfast Lactose-Free | 1 can                     | 1                |
| Carnation Instant Breakfast Powder       | 1 packet, mixed with milk | 2                |
| Ensure                                   | 8 oz.                     | 1                |
| Ensure High Protein                      | 8 oz.                     | 2                |
| Ensure Plus                              | 8 oz.                     | 2                |
| Glucerna Shake                           | 8 oz.                     | 1½               |

## Tips for Increasing Protein Servings

- Add 2 oz. of fish or chicken to your lunch or dinner..... + 2 servings
- Add an extra egg or 2 egg whites to breakfast..... + 1 serving
- Add an 8 oz. glass of milk ..... + 1 serving
- Add Carnation Instant Breakfast to your milk..... + 2 servings
- Drink an Ensure Plus or Boost Plus as a snack..... + 2 servings
- Switch from regular yogurt to Greek yogurt ..... + 1 serving
- Use milk instead of water to thin canned, condensed soups..... + 1 serving
- Snack on a handful of nuts in between meals ..... + 1 serving
- Add unflavored protein powder to soups, stews, or smoothies..... + 2 to 3 servings