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.

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
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	⅓ cup
Ice cream	1½ cups
Custard	¾ cup
Pudding	1 cup
Almonds	1 oz. (24 nuts)

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Nuts, other	1½ oz.
Pumpkin seeds	1 oz.
Sunflower seeds	1 oz.
Pine nuts	2 oz.
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons

High-Quality Protein Foods

Some high-quality protein foods are listed in the table below (continued on next page).

Each item is equal to 1 serving (7 grams) of protein.

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.

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Protein Source	Serving Size	Protein Servings
Whole Foods		
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
Supplements		
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

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help. *Your Dietitian or Diet Technician:* _____

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