

Adding Protein to Your Diet

Protein helps to build and maintain muscle, heal tissue, and keep the immune system healthy.

Some illnesses and treatments can affect your appetite. You may be eating less and not meeting your protein needs.

Eating foods with protein can help you meet your protein needs and maintain your muscle

How much protein do I need?

You may need to eat more protein if you:

- are sick
- receive treatment for cancer
- take certain medicines
- live with a chronic illness
- are recovering from surgery

Your daily protein needs

You need _____ grams of protein per day.

Tips to get enough protein

- Choose extra protein using the Protein foods on [Canada's food guide](#).
- Eat 5–6 times per day. Include foods higher in protein with all your meals and snacks. Refer to the list of foods high in protein on the next page.
- Add soy protein powder, whey protein powder, or milk powder to your foods.

Mix them into hot cereals, soups, puddings, mashed potatoes, pasta sauces, and muffins. These powders can be bought in grocery stores and pharmacies.

- Melt cheese into soups, sauces, scrambled eggs, and casseroles.
- Add nuts, hemp seed hearts, ground flax seed, and wheat germ to cereals or yogurt.

- Mix lentils and soft meats into soups, stews, and sauces. Puree them if needed.
- Drink shakes and smoothies made with ice cream, milk, Greek yogurt, and pasteurized eggs.

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

Compare the Nutrition Facts tables on different brands of the same types of foods and choose those higher in protein.

Look at serving size and the amount of protein in each serving.

Check the serving size and the protein content.

Nutrition Facts	
Per ¼ cup (175 g)	
Calories 160	% Daily Value*
Fat 2.5 g	3 %
Saturated 1.5 g	8 %
+Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 25 g	
Fibre 3 g	11 %
Sugars 15 g	15 %
Protein 8 g	
Cholesterol 10 mg	
Sodium 75 mg	3 %
Potassium 300 mg	6 %
Calcium 300 mg	23 %
Iron 1 mg	6 %






*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

For more information about adding protein to your diet:



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.
- Find ideas at [ahs.ca/GetMoreProtein](#)
- Visit [ahs.ca/Nutrition](#).

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

*Food grouping	Food	Serving size	**Protein (g)
Meat, fish, poultry, 	Beef or pork, cooked	2½ oz (75 g)	21–28
	Chicken or turkey, cooked	2½ oz (75 g)	17–22
	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
Beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds 	Beans, canned or cooked	¾ cup (175 mL)	9–11
	Chickpeas, canned, cooked or hummus	¾ cup (175 mL)	9–11
	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, dairy, and soy beverage 	Cheese, block (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, feta)	1½ oz (50 g)	10–12
	Cheese (goat)	1½ oz (50 g)	9–15
	Cottage or ricotta 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 foods 	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)	4
	Tortilla wraps	1 wrap (41 g)	4
	Nutrition Supplements and Other foods 	Ground flax seed	3 Tbsp (45 mL)
Hemp seed hearts		¼ cup (60 mL)	13
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
Wheat germ		3 Tbsp (45 mL)	6
Protein powder: whey, hemp, pea, soy		2 Tbsp (30 mL)	10–12

*Vegetables and fruits contain only small amounts of protein and are not listed here.

**The amount of protein in a serving varies depending on the brand.