



Protein

In order to adopt healthy eating habits, it helps to have a good understanding of the foods that we eat. Carbohydrate, protein, and fat are macronutrients. These foods deliver calories to the body and calories represent energy that our body transforms into the capacity to think, play, move, work, focus, and exercise. This handout provides a basic understanding of protein - food sources, functions, and tips on what to choose and when.

Food Sources:

1. **Animal Products:** chicken, pork, meat, game, fish, eggs, dairy
2. **Vegetable Protein:** beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, soy products, whole grains

Protein Function:

- ✓ Builds and repairs muscle tissue
- ✓ Provides structure and support (nails, hair, muscle, bone)
- ✓ Important for maintaining bone health
- ✓ Maintains fluid balance
- ✓ Bolsters immune function (antibodies, hormones, enzymes)
- ✓ Facilitates nutrient transport in the body
- ✓ Provides a valuable source of vitamins and minerals
- ✓ Improves satiety



Tips & Tactics:

✓ GENERAL HEALTH:

• Incorporate more **VEGETABLE** protein. Research consistently shows that people who incorporate more vegetable proteins into their diet (nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, soy) have improved cardiovascular health, bone health, reduced risk for or better control of diabetes, and greater longevity. Vegetable proteins come packaged with fiber, magnesium, folate, calcium, and potassium and may replace less nutrient dense dietary choices.



• Choose **LEAN** protein! Animal proteins (meat, chicken, pork) can come packaged with unhealthful saturated fat. Trim excess solid fats from meat and choose naturally lean varieties such as breast meat, flank steak, or buffalo.

• Choose **FISH** 1-2 times per week. Fatty fish, such as salmon, provides essential fatty acids that may improve cognitive function, reduce inflammation, and improve heart health. Both wild and farmed varieties may contribute to improved health.

• Get **ENOUGH** but not too much. The Dietary Guidelines recommend 0.36g of protein per pound of body weight. Don't exceed .9g/lb. A 150lb person needs between 54 and 135g protein per day.

• Incorporate protein with each meal and snack to improve satiety and insulin response

✓ SPORT SPECIFIC TIPS:

• Incorporate protein with every meal and snack

• Aim for 10-20g protein after training and 10g of protein 30 minutes before lifting/resistance training sessions

• Athletes have greater protein needs. Aim for .5g and .9g per pound per day.

