

PROTEIN 101

By David Heber, M.D., Ph.D.

It seems everywhere we look someone is promoting a new diet that praises the power of protein. But whether you want to lose or gain weight, or maintain your current weight, the importance of protein goes far beyond physical appearance and muscle building.

A NECESSITY FOR EVERY BODY

Protein is an important component of every cell in the body. It is an organic compound, composed of 22 amino acids, otherwise known as the building blocks of life. Protein is stored in muscles and organs, and the body utilizes it to build and repair tissues, as well as for the production of enzymes and hormones. Protein also makes it possible for blood to carry oxygen throughout the body. Along with fat and carbohydrates, protein is a "macronutrient," meaning the body needs relatively large amounts of it. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences has concluded that our daily protein requirements should be 10 percent to 35 percent of our total caloric intake, with men needing slightly more than women. A lack of protein can cause loss of muscle mass, decreased immunity, as well as weakening of the heart and respiratory system.

HOW PROTEIN AFFECTS YOUR WEIGHT

The widespread popularity of high-protein diets is due in large part to their ability to help manage hunger. When protein is absorbed, it sends a signal to the brain to decrease your hunger. Another benefit of protein is that it raises your resting metabolism by maintaining muscle mass. As we age, muscle mass decreases without exercise, so staying fit is a key to burning fat by keeping your metabolism high. Protein also leads to a much less rapid rise and fall of blood sugar and insulin, so you avoid the "sugar highs and lows" after eating sweets without adequate protein. Certain foods, however, provide a healthier resource for protein than others.

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

You can obtain healthy sources of protein without high levels of saturated fat. For example, soybeans, nuts and whole grains provide protein without much saturated fat and offer plenty of healthful fibre and micronutrients as well. If you're looking for yet another great way to obtain healthy protein, vegetable sources of protein found in Herbalife's Formula 1 shakes, are high quality and have lower calorie levels with virtually no added fat. Herbalife® products personalize your daily protein intake to match your body's needs. With a variety of shakes and snacks, Herbalife's weight-management program helps you build or maintain lean muscle while providing healthy weight-management support. Now that you've increased your knowledge of protein, you can effectively enhance your diet and allow good health to take shape.

PROTEIN FOODS AT-A-GLANCE

The following is a list of foods and their protein content in grams:

DAIRY PRODUCTS

- Egg whites: 7 whites = 25 grams
- Cottage cheese (non-fat): 1 cup = 28 grams
- Mozzarella cheese (non-fat): 28grams = 8 grams
- Yogurt (non-fat, sugar-free): one 175grams = 5 grams
- Yogurt (non-fat, plain): 1 cup = 14 grams
- Milk (non-fat): 1 cup = 10 grams

MEATS

- Beef (lean): 85 grams (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Chicken breast: 85 grams (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Turkey breast: 85 grams (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Turkey ham: 113 grams (cooked weight) = 18 grams
- Pork tenderloin: 85 grams (cooked weight) = 24 grams

FISH

- Ocean-caught fish: 113 grams (cooked weight) = 25 to 31 grams
- Shrimp, crab, lobster: 113 grams (cooked weight) = 22 to 24 grams
- Tuna: 113 grams (water packed) = 27 grams
- Scallops: 113 grams (cooked weight) = 25 grams

BEANS, LENTILS AND GRAINS

- Beans (black, pinto, etc.): ½ cup (cooked) = 7 grams
- Lentils: ½ cup (cooked) = 9 grams
- Tofu: ¼ block = 7 grams
- Veggie burger: one burger = 5 to 20 grams (varies by brand)

Note: Some ready-to-eat cereals are also good protein sources. Check labels-some have more than 10 grams of protein per serving.

HERBALIFE® FOODS

- Formula 1 shake (with 250mls non-fat milk): one serving = 18 grams
- Roasted Soy Nuts with Cardia®* Salt: one packet = 11 grams
- Protein Bar: one bar (1.41 ounces) = 10 grams