

# Nutrition and Mental Health

## Getting Enough Protein?

### Why is protein important?

Protein provides the building blocks for every cell in your body: it is the foundation for bones, muscles and tendons. Protein serves as a source for the structures that regulate your body: neurotransmitters, cell receptors, and enzymes.

### How much protein should I eat?

The quick calculation for your target protein intake is 8 grams of protein for every 20 lbs of body weight. Or one third your caloric intake is protein. Use the chart below to find how much protein you should be eating.

Your Weight (lbs)	Target (g protein)	Acceptable Range (g protein)
100	40	36-45
120	48	43-54
140	56	50-63
160	64	57-72
180	72	64-81
200	80	71-90

### Portion control

Here are some visual clues to help you keep servings to the proper size:

- 3 oz of fish or poultry = a deck of playing cards
- 1 c yogurt = a hand holding a tennis ball
- ½ c cooked grain = a small fist
- 1 oz cheese = a thumb
- 1 oz nuts = a golf ball
- 1 T nut butter or nuts = a silver dollar or a walnut
- 1 tsp oil = a quarter

### Benefits of eating enough protein

- Less fatigue, particularly in the afternoons
- Better sleep
- More energy
- Hungry less often
- Better and more stable moods
- Higher metabolism from having more muscle mass

Healthy Protein Sources					
Legumes			Nuts		
Tofu	1/2 c	10 g	Nuts	1/4 c	8 g
Firm Tofu	1/2 c	20 g	Seeds	2 T	3 g
Tempeh	1/2 c	16 g	Nut butter	2 T	8 g
Whole beans	1/2 c	7 g	Seed butter	2 T	5 g
Lentils	1/2 c	9 g	Cheese		
Refried beans	1/2 c	8 g	Cottage cheese (LF)	1/2 c	12 g
Gardenburger	1 patty	11 g	Cream cheese (LF)	2 T	2 g
Seed Grains			Hard cheese	1 oz	7 g
Barley	1/2 c	10 g	Eggs		
Millet	1/2 c	4 g	Egg, whole	1 egg	7 g
Dark rye flour	1/2 c	9 g	Egg substitute	1/4 c	7 g
Oats	1/2 c	3 g	Egg white	1	4 g
Quinoa	1/2 c	11 g	Note: Egg yolks contain nutrients that are excellent for mental health		
Brown rice	1/2 c	3 g			
White rice	1/2 c	3 g	Other		
Milk Substitutes			Protein powder	1 T	9-15 g
Soy milk	1 c	6 g	Yogurt (LF)	1 c	8-14 g
Soy cheese	1 oz	4-7 g	Wild fish	3 oz	21 g
Soy yogurt	1 c	6 g	Free range poultry	3 oz	21 g

# Nutrition and Mental Health

## How to Add Protein to Your Daily Life

### Planning Ahead

The easiest way to reach your target protein intake is to consume protein throughout the day. One way to add protein into your day is to plan your snacks ahead. The following snacks can be packed in the morning, or left in the office to eat when you need a boost:

- Hummus with carrots, celery, or pita bread
- Baba ghanoush with corn chips
- Almond butter sandwich
- Cottage cheese—can be bought in small, yogurt-sized containers
- Nut butter (almond or cashew) with apple slices

Or consider one of the following items when you are at the store looking for a snack:

- Odwalla protein shake
- A few slices of deli meat such as chicken or turkey
- Deli salad with chicken or turkey
- Tofu salads, etc.
- Teriyaki chicken kabobs

### Snacking on the road

Carry these snacks in a cool area of your car to snack on when you are feeling hungry or tired. Choose these instead of a trip to Starbucks or McDonald's:

- Bag of mixed, non-roasted nuts (hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews)
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Protein shake
- Low-sugar protein bar (like a Clif Bar)
- Keep a jar of nut butter in the car

### Finding the protein in a menu

Restaurants focus their menus on what will appeal to your stomach, not necessarily your health. Instead of ordering the usual pasta with red sauce and meat, consider one of the following options:

- Stir-fry with meat and veggies
- Bean soup
- Greek platter—includes foods like hummus, pita bread, baba ghanoush
- Chili—either vegetarian or with meat
- Grilled chicken sandwich

## Protein meals to cook at home

### Black Bean Quinoa Salad

1/2 c quinoa  
1 c white corn  
2 scallions, chopped  
1/2 c chopped green peppers  
1/2 c chopped tomatoes  
1/2 c chopped celery  
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed  
3-4 T olive oil  
2 T balsamic vinegar  
1 clove garlic, minced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Cilantro or parsley

Soak the quinoa in water for 5 minutes, then drain. Cook in 1 c water (or vegetable stock) for 15 minutes. Drain, pour into large bowl, and let cool. Mix remaining ingredients into the bowl. Serve cold.

### Bean and Quinoa Burrito

1/4 c cooked quinoa  
1/4 c fat-free refried beans  
1 T cheddar cheese  
To taste:  
Salsa  
Lettuce  
Avocado  
Low-fat sour cream  
Shredded chicken, turkey, or lean beef

Warm beans and quinoa in a small pot on the stove. Microwave tortilla for 15 seconds. Wrap ingredients in tortilla. Can be fixed in advance and heated when you're hungry.

### Lentil Stew

In pan, brown:  
2 T olive oil  
3 cloves minced garlic  
2 c stew lamb or chicken. Set aside.  
Simmer until tender (40 min):  
1 c French lentils  
3 c vegetable broth  
Add meat to lentil pot, and simmer along with the following spices for 1 hour.  
2 bay leaves  
1 tsp thyme

Add sea salt and pepper to taste. After the hour, add 1 bundle of kale and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes to reduce. Serve warm.

