got protein?

Protein GUIDELINES

Protein is among the most commonly talked about buzz words when considering a healthy diet and lifestyle -- ***How much protein to eat? What kind of protein to eat? When to eat it? Are protein supplements necessary?***

Protein plays a key role in many processes including muscle and tissue repair, fluid balance, and hormone and enzyme production. Here are some guidelines to help you on your journey to live your best life.

All proteins are not created equally.

Proteins are made up of 20 amino acids – nine of which are considered essential amino acids because the human body cannot synthesize them on its own, so they must be obtained from food. If a single food (meat, fish, an egg) contains the nine essential amino acids, it is considered a "complete protein." By combining foods from two or more incomplete proteins, you can create a complete protein meal (beans and brown rice) which still provides your body with the necessary nutrients. The best suggestion is to simply eat from a variety of sources, including lean meats and fish (if you consume animal products), nuts, seeds, legumes, greens, and even whole grains provide quality protein. If consuming animal products, look for look for organic, wild or free-range options.

Animal protein vs. Plant-based protein.

Since meat contains all of the essential amino acids that are needed by your body it is often said that you must eat animal protein. Not true! Plant-based proteins such as nuts, seeds, legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables can supply enough protein. They are also often easier to digest than animal products and less acidic – meaning your body has to spend less time digesting food, has more energy to repair and tissues and muscles, and is less inflammatory. Additionally, plant-based proteins are extremely healthy because they are filled with fiber (meat does not contain fiber) and plant-proteins do not have artery-clogging cholesterol.

How do vegans/vegetarians get enough protein?

Broccoli contains more protein per calorie than steak, and per calorie, spinach is about equal to chicken and fish. And remember, whole grains such as quinoa and brown or wild rice are rich in protein and fiber and are naturally gluten free. Ultramarathoner Scott Jurek, NBA superstar Amare Stoudemire, and NFL Houston Texans star running back Arian Foster are among a handful of elite athletes who thrive on plant-based lifestyles. In short, you can get all of your protein needs (and then some) from plants.

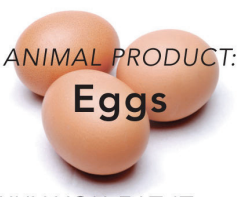
How much protein do you need? Most average adult women and men are probably consuming enough protein. If you are highly active, it's likely you need more protein. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for average adults is 0.36 grams/lb (for example, 47 grams of protein for a 130 lb person on a daily basis; 70 grams of protein if you weigh 195 pounds). If you are highly active, aim for an intake of at least 0.55-0.77 grams/lb). If you weigh 130 pounds, aim for approximately 72-100 grams of protein a day; a 195-pound athlete will need to aim for approximately 107-123 grams/day. During times of heavy training and racing may require the higher end of the spectrum. Looking for extra protein supplements? Back 2 Normal is an official retailer of Brendan Brazier's Vega brand, which is a product line of vegan, gluten-free and soy-free nutritional supplements.

Try this, not that.

ANIMAL PRODUCT:
Milk Products

WHY YOU EAT IT:
source of calcium

TRY: **Broccoli**, **Leafy Greens**, **Beans**, and **Almonds**. These foods are also very high in calcium.



ANIMAL PRODUCT:
Eggs

WHY YOU EAT IT:
source of protein

TRY: **Beans**, **Vega products**, and **Lentils**. These foods are good sources of vegetarian protein. Plus, they are low in cholesterol. (One egg contains as much as 220mg of cholesterol!)

ANIMAL PRODUCT:
Chicken

WHY YOU EAT IT:
source of animal protein

TRY: **Wild-Caught Salmon, Organic Grass-Fed Bison** and **Free-Range Turkey.** Omega 3, fatty acids, and DHA can also be found in these foods.

What about dairy and whey? Despite the claim that "milk does a body good" – dairy is very acidic to the body. It is hard for the body to digest and can leach calcium and magnesium from your bones to help neutralize the acid, which is counterproductive to consuming dairy as a calcium source. It is also very mucous forming and inflammatory, leading to allergy and asthma symptoms and even joint pain. Whey or whey isolate are often found in protein powders. They are a byproduct of dairy and also acidic to the body, leading to inflammation. Vega All-in-One and Vega Performance Protein are plant-based, alkaline forming, and low glycemic options.

The skinny on soy. Soy is definitely one of the most controversial foods in the world. Over 90% of the soy produced in the U.S. is genetically modified and the crops are heavily sprayed with herbicides and pesticides, making these sources of soy toxic to your body. Yes, soy is high in protein, but many believe the risks of consuming soy outweigh the benefits. Soy can disrupt your hormone and thyroid function, including reducing male fertility and increasing risk of breast cancer. Consume soy in moderate amounts and look for sources of non-GMO and naturally fermented soy such as miso.

Special thanks to Megan Kahn, Integrative Health Coach of Back 2 Normal for providing this month's wellness topic. To learn how to maximize your protein intake, call Back 2 Normal and book an appointment with Megan today!

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