

FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

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Protein: Not just a Supper Thing

**Are you having trouble getting enough protein due to a limited budget?
Call 2-1-1 to find the resources available in your area.**

Protein seems to be the latest buzzword in the grocery store. You may have seen an increase in products that contain the word protein on the front of the label. You may have even noticed it on products that you wouldn't think should be a good source of protein- I mean protein cookies? This starts to beg the question- how much and where should your protein be coming from?

While many people often do meet the recommended protein amounts, up to one-third of older adults do not. This is often due to many reasons such as decreased appetites, dental issues, taste change, swallowing problems, and limited financial resources. As people age, the need for protein becomes more important as it can help preserve muscle mass and improve recovery time from illnesses. One study published in 2017, found that older adults who consumed the smallest amounts of protein were almost twice as likely to have difficulty walking or climbing steps as those who ate the most.

So if you eat a chicken breast or a hamburger for supper, you are meeting your protein needs, right? Well not so fast. Protein can and should be enjoyed at all times of the day - specifically at breakfast and snacks. Let's go deeper into learning about how to incorporate protein throughout your entire day, not just at supper!



Start with a smaller step
towards a bigger goal!

Be Active. Eat Healthy!

This month, I will take action by...



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About 25% of Americans skip breakfast on a routine basis. Are you a part of that 25%?



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Food and physical activity snacks!

Why is Protein so Important for My Health?

You may have heard before: “Eat more protein,” or “This food is great because it is high in protein.” But many times, we don’t talk about why protein is so good for you. Let’s go to the basics. All foods are made up of 3 macronutrients: carbohydrates, protein and fat. Your body needs a good balance of all three to keep working properly.

The Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) are a set of values used to plan and assess nutrient intakes of healthy people.

Daily Macronutrients DRI Recommendations

Protein
10-35%

Carbohydrates
45-65%

Fat
20-35%

Source: <https://www.piedmont.org/living-better/why-is-protein-important-in-your-diet>

What it does for your body:

1. **Build:** Protein is made up of amino acids, which are the building blocks of important parts of your body such as bones, muscles, skin, cartilage, even your hair and nails.
2. **Repair:** Protein helps your body repair tissues that have been broken or torn.
3. **Oxygenate:** There are proteins found in the red blood cells that help to bring oxygen to all parts of your body.
4. **Digest:** Many proteins you eat each day go into creating enzymes that help you digest food.
5. **Regulate:** Regulating hormones is another important task of proteins from your diet.

Protein is best consumed in 20-30 gram portions. Your body utilizes the protein most effectively in those amounts. Spreading out the amount of protein you get at each meal can help you get the most bang for your buck!

Let's Talk “Breaking the Fast”

Breakfast, the most important meal of the day, right? Unfortunately, not all of us are getting the best meal we can at breakfast. Maybe you lack time in the mornings, or you're not hungry, or don't want to make a large meal. Whatever the reason may be, focusing on those barriers can help you to get the most of your breakfast.

Benefits of eating breakfast:

1. Eating breakfast can help give your body energy and reduce brain fog, especially as you start your day. This in turn can help you stay more alert, focused and joyful.
2. Studies have shown that eating breakfast on a regular basis can lower your risk for developing type 2 diabetes.
3. Breakfast can be a good time to get essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients; specifically protein.



How can I incorporate protein into my breakfast?

- Greek Yogurt. You can eat alone, paired with granola and fruit or in a smoothie.
- Cottage Cheese. You can mix in fruit, nuts or cereal. Some even enjoy spreading on whole grain toast.
- Peanut Butter. Add to a whole grain English muffin or on a waffle.
- Eggs. A great high protein breakfast option that is versatile. Eat in an omelet, on a sandwich, or in a wrap.
- Breakfast Shake. Add protein powder, greek yogurt, milk to get a boost of protein.

Some other high protein options to add to your breakfast: black beans, nuts, turkey bacon or sausage.

Source: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/do-you-really-need-to-eat-breakfast/>

Source: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/breakfast#why-breakfast-is-so-important>



Fresh Conversations is developed by: Iowa Dept. of Public Health idph.iowa.gov/inn
Iowa Dept. on Aging iowaaging.gov

How to Build a Healthy Snack

Have you ever started to feel hungry in between meals but aren't sure what to snack on? You aren't alone! Contrary to what you may have heard, snacking doesn't have to be unhealthy! Healthy snacking in between meals is a great way to get more protein, fiber, and antioxidants needed to keep our bodies strong and our appetites appeased. When planning your snack, try to pair a **protein** food (like fish or nut butters) with a **carbohydrate** food (like crackers or fruit). This combination gives your body the nutrients needed to keep you feeling full and energized. Additionally, carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contain fiber. **Fiber** has many functions in our bodies including promoting regularity, maintaining a healthy gut, and even lowering cholesterol! Some foods, including many fruits and vegetables, nuts, and dark chocolate, contain **antioxidants** which can help protect our bodies from stress and disease. Apples, artichokes, plums, blueberries, strawberries, sweet potatoes, walnuts, and pecans are some other foods filled with antioxidants.

Physical Activity "Snacks"



The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans has three major recommendations.

1. **Move 150 minutes a week.**
2. **Strength train two days per week.**
3. **Move more and sit less throughout the day.**

This means incorporating movement all day long to add up to meeting the guidelines of 150 minutes a week. This is like "snacking" on physical activity. All movement is good for you and it is all important!

What does a physical activity "snack" look like?

Taking the dog for a walk, doing easy body-weight exercises during a commercial break, parking at the back of the parking lot and walking into the store, having a dance party in your kitchen with the grandkids, walking after dinner for "dessert", tending to your garden, walking a few blocks to run a simple errand instead of driving, etc. All of these small segments of movement add up to a lot of physical activity.

Some simple snack ideas (and the healthy nutrients they contain!) to get you started:

- Tuna and whole-grain crackers (Protein + Fiber)
- Peanut butter on whole-grain toast (Protein + Fiber)
- Fruit and nuts (Protein + Fiber)
- Veggies and hummus (Protein + Fiber)
- Popcorn and mixed nuts (Protein + Fiber)
- Low-fat milk and whole-grain cereal (Protein + Fiber)
- Nut butter and apples (Protein + Fiber + Antioxidants)
- Fruit and cottage cheese or yogurt (Fiber+ Antioxidants + Protein)

Source: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2007/data-on-food-antioxidants-aid-research/>



In addition to these healthy and delicious snacks, try drinking a glass of water with your snack to help keep your body hydrated and your hunger satisfied!

Need help finding a food pantry, free hot meals or community garden?
Call 2-1-1 for resources available in your area.



Vegetable Frittata



Serves 4, 1 slice per serving, \$0.74 per serving

Ingredients:

2 cups vegetables, chopped (mushrooms, onions, peppers, tomatoes)
6 eggs
¼ cup nonfat milk
½ cup shredded cheese

Instructions:

1. Heat an oven proof skillet over medium heat. Spray with nonstick cooking spray. Add vegetables and saute until tender, 3-5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium low.
2. While vegetables are cooking, beat eggs and milk together in a medium sized bowl. Stir in cheese.
3. Turn oven broiler on high.
4. Pour eggs over vegetables. Cover with a lid. Cook until eggs are nearly set, about 6 minutes. Do not stir and do not remove lid.
5. Remove lid from skillet and place skillet in the oven. Broil until eggs are completely set and lightly browned, 2-3 minutes.

Instead of one large pan, make these into individual egg cups using a muffin tin. Freeze for 2 - 3 months.

Nutrition Information (per serving): 190 calories, 12 grams fat, 5 grams carbohydrates, 1 grams fiber, 14 grams protein, 210 milligrams sodium

This recipe is provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. For more resources like this, visit the Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website at <http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>. Spend Smart. Eat Smart. is a registered trademark of Iowa State University.

Food Spotlight: Tomatoes



- Tomatoes contain a large amount of vitamin A which is great in improving your vision.
- Botanically, the tomato is a fruit of the vine. In the kitchen, it is almost always treated as a vegetable. In 1893, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the tomato was a vegetable for the purpose of levying a tariff.
- It's recommended to not refrigerate your tomatoes. The cold can halt ripening and kill the flavor of the tomatoes. The exception to this is once they are cut, they must be refrigerated.
- To eliminate the skin for cooked dishes, gently lower 2 or 3 tomatoes at a time into enough boiling water to cover. Boil for 15 to 30 seconds, lift into a colander with a slotted spoon. Rinse briefly under cold running water. Peel off and discard skins.
- Tomatoes are considered "in season" in the summer and may be the best time to purchase for your budget!

Source: <https://www.floridatomatoes.org>

Word Scramble

TDTINAXANI

BFRIE

KFRTEBASA

RINTEOP

PERIRA

OMOTSTE

UICANOSRTTENMR

NKCSAS



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ANSWERS: Antioxidant, Fiber, Breakfast, Protein, Repair, Tomatoes, Macronutrients, Snacks