

AN INTRODUCTION TO PROTEIN

By David Heber, 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 utilises 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 US 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 deficiency can impair important body functions and protein can cause loss of muscle mass.

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 maintains muscle mass, which is known to increase metabolism.* If we neglect to exercise as we age, muscle mass decreases, 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” that you might experience 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. Another great way to obtain healthy protein is from the vegetable sources of protein found in Herbalife’s high quality Formula 1 shakes. Herbalife products may assist you in personalising your daily protein intake to match your body’s needs. Herbalife’s nutritional products may help 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.

*muscle cells are much more metabolically demanding than fat cells, so the greater our proportion of muscle to fat, the faster our metabolic rate.

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 (low fat): 1 cup = 28 grams
- Mozzarella cheese (low fat): one 1-ounce stick = 8 grams
- Yogurt (low fat): one 6-ounce carton = 5 grams
- Yogurt (low fat, plain): 1 cup = 14 grams
- Semi-skimmed milk: 1 cup = 8.5 grams

MEATS

- Beef (lean): 3 ounces (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Chicken breast: 3 ounces (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Turkey breast: 3 ounces (cooked weight) = 25 grams
- Turkey ham: 4 ounces (cooked weight) = 18 grams
- Pork tenderloin: 3 ounces (cooked weight) = 24 grams

FISH

- Ocean-caught fish: 4 ounces (cooked weight) = 25 to 31 grams
- Prawns, crab, lobster: 4 ounces (cooked weight) = 22 to 24 grams
- Tuna: 4 ounces (water packed) = 27 grams
- Scallops: 4 ounces (cooked weight) = 25 grams

BEANS, LENTILS AND GRAINS

- Beans (black, pinto, etc.): ½ cup (cooked) = 7 grams
- Lentils: ½ cup (cooked) = 9 grams
- Quinoa: ½ cup (cooked) = 6 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 the label as – some have more than 10 grams of protein per serving.

HERBALIFE® FOODS

- Formula 1 shake (with 250ml semi-skimmed milk): one serving = 18 grams
- Roasted Soybeans: one packet (1 ounce) = 11 grams
- Protein Bar: one bar (1.41 ounces) = 10 grams
- Formula 3 Personalised Protein Powder

*nutritional values are approximate and may vary depending what brand and products you use.