

How Much Protein Do I Need and its Importance in Your Daily Diet

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How much protein do I need? Well, if you are asking this question, then let us know something too! That is, are you trying to lose weight or trying to gain muscle? What is the one food type you are loading upon? Protein, isn't? Well, you are not alone! Right from sports fanatics to the new fitness enthusiasts on the block, no one really forgets their daily dose of protein before they begin their exercise regime!

The benefits of proteins are way too many to turn a blind eye too. It fires up your muscle-building process, and can also prevent obesity, heart disease and [control your blood sugar levels](#) as well with great aplomb.

How Much Protein Does the Average Person Need?

But how much is too much? How much protein do you really need? And are we consuming way too much? There is an easy way to find out; The Dietary Reference Intake is 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight, or 0.36 grams per pound.

Breaking it down means that an average sedentary man should consume 56 grams per day and an average sedentary woman should consume 46 grams per day.

But wait up! This might not be the right amount for others. In other words, the requirement of protein cannot be standardized. The requirement differs from person to person, and the person's activity levels, state of health and physical goals are all taken into purview.

Why Should you add More Protein to your Diet?

You need three reasons to eat more protein, but we will give you eight! Protein rich food is a savior when your hunger pangs come knocking at the most inopportune times. It keeps you satisfied and stops you from over-indulging!



Now if you have a plateful of salad and a few boiled eggs on the other, which one will help you to crack the whip on the hunger game more effectively? Before, you say boiled eggs; we will tell you why proteins are your best buddy when it comes to health.

- **A sugar craving curber-** When your body is low on protein levels, chances are that your body will have a strong sugar craving; one that will fuel you up faster. But this will also trigger off your blood sugar levels, which will slow down [the fat burning process](#).

So, though you may be craving a chocolate chip cookie, a handful of almonds is all you need to put a lid on the hunger pangs.

- **A protein-** rich breakfast will give you the jump start for a hectic day- Downing a sugar filled cereal may satisfy you for a few hours, but a protein-packed breakfast does a little extra, it keeps you fuller for a longer time and keeps all those pesky cravings away. Also, it helps you focus more.
- **Add protein to all your meals-** So you should not just stop at breakfast, make protein an integral part of all your meals. Have a healthy 75-80 grams daily for women and 100-120 grams of protein daily for men.



But again, the requirement differs from person to person. Like if you are training for a marathon, probably your requirement for protein will be that much more.

Even if you get more protein, the right quality of protein and digesting it well is equally important.

- **Get your proteins from the right sources-** It does not only depend upon the quantity of protein but also on the quality of protein you should be having. In this respect, the usual suspects do sufficiently well – chicken, fish, and eggs (get the free-range variety).

Vegetarians or vegans can get their proteins from legumes, nuts, and seeds. Sometimes when you are on the go, a protein shake can do remarkably well! You are not compromising on nutrition, and also when you do not want to cook elaborate meals to meet up with your daily nutrition requirements, protein shakes do just fine.

- **Make sure you are assimilating your food well-** It is not only about eating the nutrients but also making sure you assimilate the food well. And for that, chew your food well, eat the right protein, the right amount of protein and also absorb it well. So you have got to ensure you pay attention to all these minute details to get the best of protein.
- **Increase muscle mass and strength-** Protein is one of the building blocks of our body, so eating more protein will help you build more muscle and strength, especially when you are strength –training or doing rigorous exercises. Having adequate amounts of protein will help stop muscle breakdown too.



Just makes complete sense why you need to amp your protein intake to increase muscle mass and strength.

- **Protein aids in optimum bone health-** The right amount of protein can help you stall bone loss and stave off diseases like osteoporosis, especially when you reach old age.

This holds especially true for women after menopause. Having adequate amounts of protein and exercising are two powerful weapons to combat age-related bone problems.

- **It increases fat-burning and also boosts metabolism-** Now this is something we really like, protein can aid in weight loss. Protein has a considerably higher thermic effect (it is the body's ability to utilize the energy to digest) and also helps in the assimilation of the nutrients. In this way, protein is more effective than either carbohydrates or fat.

Various studies done on the fat burning power of protein have proved that people whose protein intake was high, were able to burn more calories; as much as 260 calories more than people who ate less protein.

- **Protein can help you lose weight and keep it off-** Most [weight loss diets](#) are not sustainable and though initially you are able to lose weight, the weight invariably comes back with a vengeance.



However, if you eat a balanced diet with the right amount of protein, you will be able to lose weight and keep it off too! Yes, protein needs to be a permanent fixture for all your meals for you to make headway, as far as your weight loss goals are concerned.

- **Your body can help recover after an injury-** Since protein is regarded as the main building block, your body needs it in adequate amounts to build new cells and tissues.

So if you have recently suffered an injury, make sure you have amped up the protein levels to accelerate the healing process.

Calculate the Exact Amount of Protein You Need

To get your adequate amount of protein or “RDA,” that is Recommended Dietary Allowance, multiply the number 0.36 by your weight in pounds.

That would be 54 grams for sedentary 150-pound women. You need to double it up if you are an active person bordering on being an athlete; and if you need optimal protein, which can help you support weight loss and also maintain your bone health, especially when you grow old.



Protein Requirement for Active People

Your protein needs increase manifold when you increase your activity levels too. So, how active is really active? A 35-40-minute exercise routine 5-6 days a week can qualify as an active routine. If you also add resistance training to your fitness regime, then consider adding 1.2 to 2 grams of dietary protein to your meal plans. It is particularly great in building muscle tissue.

Protein Requirement for People Trying to Lose Weight

If you are trying to shed the excess pounds, then bringing protein to your scheme of things can never be considered as foolhardy! Why? The explanation is pretty simple really; it helps you banish hunger pangs with greater efficacy than either fat or carbs!

Since you feel content with a much lesser amount on your plate, you tend to drop those unnecessary pounds easily. So how much protein should you gorge on? 1.2 to 1.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body-weight is what you should aim for. This is an ideal amount to stop muscle loss.

The Best Protein Sources

What are the benefits of protein? Too many, in fact, but you have to choose protein sources that are nutrient-rich and lower in saturated fat and calories, such as:

- Beans
- Lean meats
- Soy
- Seafood
- Low-fat dairy
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds

You should always change your protein sources. For example, one day you can have salmon, for other days you can have other fish and chicken as well. The vegetarian sources are equally potent. Go for beans like chickpea, rajma and so on.



Here's how many grams of protein are in these foods:

- 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese: 10-14 grams
- 1/2 cup cooked lentils: 9g
- 1/2 cup Tofu: 7-13g
- 2 tablespoons of all natural (without sugar and artificial flavoring) peanut butter or almond butter: 6-8g
- 85 grams skinless chicken breast: 25g
- 85 grams Fish (depending on type of fish): 17-20g
- 1 serving of rajma (kidney beans) -8 grams
- 85 grams Cheese: 7 grams
- 28 grams nuts: 4-7g
- 1 large egg: 6g
- 113 grams low-fat plain yogurt: 6g
- 118 ml soy milk: 5g
- 118 ml low-fat milk: 4g
- Per 1/2 cup Amaranth: 4.67 grams
- Chia seeds per tablespoon: 2.5 grams

Protein Requirement for Middle Aged People

If you are on the threshold of hitting the middle age, consider adding more protein to your diet to avoid bone loss and other degenerative bone diseases like osteoporosis. Optimally, that's 20-30 grams of protein per meal, so it can be 12-15% of your daily calorific needs.



Protein- Rich Recipes

Now that you know that protein is really essential for you, you have to cook it right to get best of your protein rich meal. A balanced meal is what you should look for; a healthy dose of carbs, fats, and protein! You need to pack in all the nine amino acids which your body cannot make on its own, and hence the importance of adding protein to your diet.

Vegetarians or vegans need not feel that their diet is devoid of protein, the following recipe is a case in point. It's a meal in itself when combined with brown rice.

1. Rajma Salad

The Indian way of cooking rajma leaves much to be desired since there is way too much oil and spices. Overcooking a food can often make you lose some of its important enzymes.

This recipe not only enhances the flavors, but also makes it your go-to meal especially when you are trying to [lose weight and get a flat belly](#).

Rajma or red kidney beans fall into the category of low glycemic index foods. These kinds of foods do not spike the blood glucose levels, especially in people suffering from diabetes

In other words, they raise the blood glucose levels really slowly. Also, the fact that they contain lean protein and healthy carbs makes this your ideal meal to drive away hunger cravings.

**Ingredients:**

- Lettuce, Green Onion, Garlic- as per requirement
- Apple-1
- Paneer-1/2 a cup
- Rajma-1/2 a cup
- Black Pepper Powder
- Walnut-10
- Vinegar-1 tsp.
- Honey- 1tbsp.
- Salt- as per requirement

Method:

- Take the honey in a pan along with ½ cup of walnut and cook it on a medium flame. This will coat on the walnuts.
- Take the honey coated walnuts in a plate and allow them to cool. Now crumble the walnuts into small pieces.
- Take 3 tbsp. of vinegar and 3 finely chopped garlic buds, add salt as per taste into a bowl and mix it well.
- Now place the finely chopped lettuce in the serving bowl and add the chopped apple with the paneer and rajma which was boiled previously; and ½ cup finely chopped green onion.
- Add the garlic and vinegar mixture over it. Garnish it with walnut before serving.

2. Chicken Salad

When in doubt, rustle up this chicken salad, which will be your perfect partner for your no carb days. Greatly fulfilling, it can be a perfect meal for adults as well as for kids. Chicken is great for losing weight because of its low carb and lean protein content. It is packed with essential vitamins and minerals, so this is a very versatile food, suitable for everyone.



Ingredients

- Chicken- 150 gms (boiled and chopped into fine pieces)
- Carrot- 1 (sliced)
- Onion- 1 (sliced)
- Tomato- 1 (chopped)
- Potato- ½ (boiled and chopped)
- Lettuce leaves- 5-6
- Mayonnaise- 1 tbsp.
- Salt- to taste

For the Masala

- Garam masala- ¼ tbsp.
- Cumin powder- ¼ tbsp.
- Red chili powder- ¼ tbsp.
- Fenugreek powder- a pinch
- Turmeric powder- a pinch

Method

- Mix all the masala ingredients with a little water, into a paste. Once they are nicely mixed, apply them on the chicken pieces. Keep it aside for marination for 20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, add the veggies in the form of carrot, onion, tomato, potato and lettuce leaves into a bowl and mix them well.
- Now heat a pan and put the marinated chicken pieces; sauté them till you get the aroma wafting from your food.
Add the chicken pieces into the bowl. Sprinkle some salt and finally add the mayonnaise. Stir the ingredients well.
- Your dish is ready to relish!

So now you know the benefits of protein for weight loss, don't forget to add more of it to your meals. It is indeed a great way to stay fit and healthy!

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