

Protein in common foods

For patients with cancer

Why is protein important?

Getting enough protein can help you:

- Build a healthy immune system
- Keep your muscle mass and strength
- Fight infection
- Heal and get better faster

Protein foods are a good source of calories. Calories can help you gain or maintain weight.

How much protein do I need?

During cancer treatment your protein needs may be higher than usual.

The average healthy adult needs 0.8 g of protein per kg of their body weight each day.





Example: a 75 kg healthy adult needs 60 g protein, daily (75 kg x 0.8 g protein/kg = 60 g protein/day)





If you have cancer you may need more protein, about 1.2 – 1.5 g of protein per kg of your body weight. Ask a dietitian about how much protein you need. Try to get:

g/day

What foods have protein?

Foods high in protein include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, legumes (dried beans, peas, and lentils), soy, nuts, and seeds. Grain products have some protein. Fruits and vegetables have almost no protein.

Type of Food	Food	Serving Size	Average Protein Content (g)
Meat and Poultry (cooked) 	Chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb, veal, wild game	3 oz. (85 g)	24
	Fish and Shellfish (cooked) 	Salmon, snapper, rainbow trout, tuna, whitefish, halibut, shrimp, scallops, canned fish	3 oz. or ½ can (85 g)
Legumes (cooked or canned) 	Crab, lobster	3 oz. (85 g)	15
	Lentils, chickpeas, split peas, black beans, kidney beans, navy beans	¾ cup (175 ml)	11
Eggs and Dairy 	Hummus	¼ cup (60 ml)	4
	Cottage cheese, ricotta cheese	½ cup (125 ml)	14
	Eggs	2 large	12
	Cheddar, mozzarella, goat cheese	1 ½ oz. (42 g)	12
	Yogurt (Greek or Icelandic)	½ cup (125 ml)	12
	Milk	1 cup (250 ml)	9
	Skim milk powder	¼ cup (60 ml)	9
	Milkshake	1 cup (250 ml)	6
Yogurt (regular)	½ cup (125 ml)	6	

Soy and Non-Dairy Choices 	Soybeans (boiled)	¾ cup (175 ml)	21
	Tofu (firm)	¾ cup (150 g)	12
	Soy beverage, pea beverage	1 cup (250 ml)	8
	Tofu (soft)	¾ cup (150 g)	7
	Almond, rice, or coconut beverage	1 cup (250 ml)	1 or less
Nuts and Seeds (shelled) 	Hemp hearts	¼ cup (60 ml)	13
	Pumpkin seeds, squash seeds	¼ cup (60 ml)	9
	Almonds, peanuts, pistachios	¼ cup (60 ml)	7
	Peanut butter, almond butter	2 Tbsp. (30 ml)	7
	Sunflower seeds	¼ cup (60 ml)	6
	Cashews, walnuts, pine nuts	¼ cup (60 ml)	5
	Tahini	2 Tbsp. (30 ml)	5
Nutrition Supplements 	Naked Pea protein powder	¼ cup (60 ml)	25
	Whey protein powder	¼ cup (60 ml)	19
	Beneprotein powder	¼ cup (60 ml)	16
	Ensure High Protein	1 bottle (235 ml)	16
	Boost High Protein	1 bottle (237 ml)	15
	Boost Plus or Ensure Plus	1 bottle (237 ml)	14
Grains 	Bagel (white)	½ medium (50 g)	6
	Naan (white)	½ small (45 g)	5
	English muffin (white or whole wheat)	1 muffin (57 g)	5
	Oatmeal (cooked)	¾ cup (175 ml)	4
	Pasta (white or whole wheat, cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	4
	Quinoa (cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	4
	Matzo (plain)	1 cracker (28 g)	3
	Bulgur, couscous (cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	3
	Bread (all kinds)	1 slice (26 g)	3
	Pita (white or whole wheat)	½ large (32 g)	3
	Tortilla (white, whole wheat, or corn)	1 small (34 g)	2
	Barley, rice (white or brown, cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	2
	Cream of Wheat (cooked)	¾ cup (175 ml)	2
	Dry cereal	¾ cup (175 ml)	Check label
Fruits and Vegetables	Almost no protein		

Note: This handout is not a full list of brands or products. The Odette Cancer Centre does not recommend one brand over another and is not responsible for any products listed.

If you are a patient at the Odette Cancer Centre and you would like more nutrition information, please visit the Nutrition Resource Centre, T-Wing ground floor, TG-261 (across from the café) or call 416-480-5000 ext. 3438.