



ADDING PROTEIN TO YOUR DIET

Your protein needs are higher than what is shown in [Canada's Food Guide](#) if you have cancer, are receiving treatment for cancer, or are recovering from surgery.

Why Do I Need Protein?

- Your body needs protein to build and maintain muscle, heal tissue, and for a healthy immune system.
- Some illnesses and treatments can affect your appetite. You may be eating less and not meeting your protein needs.
- Eating foods high in protein can help you meet your protein needs and maintain your strength.

What if I Can't Eat Enough Protein?



If you can't eat enough protein, [ask to see a dietitian.](#)

Some Tips for Increasing Your Protein Intake:



Choose extra portions of foods high in protein using foods from the protein foods group in [Canada's Food Guide](#).



Eat 5-6 times per day and include foods high in protein with all of your meals and snacks.



Add soy protein, whey protein, or milk powder to hot cereals, soups, puddings, mashed potatoes, pasta sauces, and muffins.



Melt cheese into soups, sauces, scrambled eggs, and casseroles.



Add nuts, hemp seed hearts, flax seed, and wheat germ to cereals or yogurt.



Purée lentils and add to soups, stews, and sauces.



Make and drink blender shakes with ice cream, milk, Greek yogurt, and pasteurized eggs.



Talk to your dietitian about other ways to increase the protein in your diet.

How Much Protein Do I Need?



People with cancer need between **1.2 and 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.**

For Example: 75 kg (165lb)
= 75 kg x 1.2g/kg to 75 kg x 1.5g/kg
= **90 to 113 grams** of protein per day

Sources:

Deutz et al. *Clin Nutr.* 2014;33(6):929-36.
Arends et al. *Clin Nutr.* 2016;36(1):11-48

Adapted with approval from Alberta Health Services, Nutrition Services, December 2020.

Links:



How Can I Get the Protein That I Need?

Food Group*	Food	Serving Size	Protein (g)**
Meat & Alternatives 	Beans, canned or cooked	3/4 cup (175 mL)	9-11
	Beef or pork, cooked	2 1/2 oz (75 g)	21-28
	Chicken or turkey, cooked	2 1/2 oz (75 g)	17-22
	Chickpeas, canned, cooked or hummus	3/4 cup (175 mL)	9-11
	Eggs, large	2	12
	Eggs, pasteurized, whites or whole	6 Tbsp (60 mL)	10-12
	Fish, cooked or canned	2 1/2 oz (75 g)	11-19
	Lentils, canned or cooked	3/4 cup (175 mL)	13
	Nuts and seeds	1/4 cup (60 mL)	5-8
	Peanut butter	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	7
	Soy burger patty	1 patty (2 oz/70 g)	10
	Tofu, firm	3/4 cup (175 mL)	10-17
	Milk & Alternatives 	Cheese block (Cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss, feta)	1 1/2 oz (50 g)
Cheese (goat)		1 1/2 oz (50 g)	9-15
Cottage cheese		1 cup (250 mL)	28-30
Fortified soy beverage		1 cup (250 mL)	7
Milk		1 cup (250 mL)	9
Milk powder		1/3 cup (75 mL/25 g)	9
Yogurt, Greek (plain and flavoured)		3/4 cup (175 mL)	14-18
Yogurt, Regular (plain and flavoured)		3/4 cup (175 mL)	6-8
Grain Products 	Bread	1 slice (35 g)	3-6
	Cooked cereal (oat bran, mixed grain, rolled oats)	3/4 cup (150 g)	4-6
	Cold cereal (labelled as high protein; read for label serving size)	30 g (1/8-3/4 cup) (30 mL-175 mL)	5-7
	Granola protein bar (labelled as high protein)	1 bar (40-50 g)	10
	Pasta (protein-fortified), cooked	1/2 cup (125 mL)	5-6
	Quinoa, cooked	1/2 cup (125 mL)	3-4
	Ground flax seeds	3 Tbsp (45 mL)	6
	Hemp seed hearts	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	7-8
	Nutrition Supplements & Other Foods 	Nutrition supplement drinks	1 cup (250 mL)
Nutrition supplement puddings		3/4 cup (175 mL)	4-7
Protein bars		1 bar (50-80 g)	10-20
Soy protein powder		2 Tbsp (30 mL)	9-12
Wheat germ		3 Tbsp (45 mL)	6
Whey protein powder		2 Tbsp (30 mL)	20

*Vegetables and fruits on Canada's Food Guide contains only small amounts of protein and is not included here.

**Amount of protein per serving varies depending on the brand.