

Thinking About PROTEIN IN A NEW WAY

When people think of protein, visions of steak, burgers or ribs often come to mind. However, many plant-based foods supply a healthy dose of protein.

TIPS FOR EATING A PLANT-BASED DIET

Plant-based foods can easily meet protein requirements.

Use the following tips to maximize your choices:

- **Focus on whole foods.** Consume more whole, minimally processed plant foods and fewer foods that are highly processed and low in nutrients.
- **Include a good source of protein at most meals and snacks.** Protein has many important functions in the body – it helps build and maintain muscle and bone mass, supports immunity, aids in nutrient transport and helps fight hunger. Including this valuable nutrient at most eating occasions will ensure your body gets enough to stay healthy and function at its best.
- **Vary your protein choices.** Our bodies need 20 different amino acids to build protein, nine of which our bodies cannot make. These nine amino acids must be obtained through food and are considered “essential amino acids.” Animal sources of protein contain all nine of these, making them complete proteins. However, choosing a variety of unprocessed plant-based foods can provide the necessary amino acids for most people. Refer to the sample diet for suggestions on building a nutritionally complete plant-based diet.

SAMPLE DIET

This plant-based meal plan would meet the protein needs of most adults.*

	FOOD	AMOUNT	PROTEIN (g)
BREAKFAST	CRANBERRY OATMEAL		
	<i>Gluten-free oatmeal, cooked</i>	1 cup	5
	<i>Chia seeds</i>	2 Tbsp.	6
	<i>Dried cranberries</i>	2 Tbsp.	0
	Almonds	¼ cup	8
	Unsweetened soy milk	1 cup	8
SNACK	Celery	1 cup	0
	Peanut butter	2 Tbsp.	7
LUNCH	POWER-PACKED SALAD		
	<i>Spinach, fresh vegetables</i>	As desired	3
	<i>Hilary's Veggie Bites</i>	5	5
	<i>Sunflower Seeds</i>	3 Tbsp.	4
	<i>Shredded vegan cheese</i>	2 Tbsp.	1
	<i>Hilary's Balsamic Thyme Dressing</i>	2 Tbsp.	0
	Pear	1	0
Pumpkin seeds	½ cup	6	
SNACK	Steamed edamame, shelled	½ cup	12
DINNER	Quinoa chili	1.5 cups	13
	Steamed broccoli	½ cup	1
	Coconut “yogurt”	¾ cup	1
	Strawberries	1 cup	0
TOTAL DAILY PROTEIN INTAKE			80

*Protein needs vary based on life stage and activity level. Consult with a dietitian or your healthcare provider to determine your specific requirements.

MEET YOUR PROTEIN NEEDS WITH PLANT-BASED FOODS

While protein needs can be easily met by consuming a variety of nutrient-rich plant-based foods, eggs and dairy products, which are animal-based, provide additional meatless options. Below are versatile, delicious foods that will provide your body ample protein, minus the meat.

PLANT-BASED FOODS	AMOUNT	PROTEIN (g)
SOY-BASED*		
Edamame, shelled	½ cup	12
Tofu, raw	½ cup	10
Soy milk	1 cup	6
NUTS/PEANUTS*		
Almonds	¼ cup	8
Peanuts	¼ cup	7
Walnuts	¼ cup	4
GLUTEN-CONTAINING GRAINS*		
Whole grain pasta, cooked	1 cup	7
Oats, cooked	1 cup	5
GLUTEN-FREE GRAINS		
Millet, cooked	½ cup	5
Amaranth, cooked	½ cup	4
Quinoa, cooked	½ cup	4
LEGUMES		
Lentils, cooked	½ cup	9
Black beans, cooked	½ cup	8
Chickpeas, cooked	½ cup	7
Hummus	¼ cup	4
SEEDS		
Hemp seeds	3 Tbsp.	10
Sunflower seed butter	2 Tbsp.	9
Pumpkin seeds	½ cup	6
Chia seeds	2 Tbsp.	6
Flaxseed, ground	2 Tbsp.	4
Sunflower seeds	3 Tbsp.	4
VEGETABLES		
Sweet Potato	1 cup	8
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	5
Potato	1 cup	4
Peas	½ cup	4
HILARY'S PRODUCTS		
Hilary's Veggie Bites	6	4-5
Hilary's Veggie Burgers	1	5

ANIMAL-BASED FOODS	AMOUNT	PROTEIN (g)
EGGS*		
Egg	1	6
Egg white	1	3.5
DAIRY PRODUCTS*		
Greek yogurt	1 cup	15-18
Cottage cheese	½ cup	12
Milk	1 cup	8
Cheese	1 ounce	7

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS PROVIDE SEVERAL BENEFITS:

- **Cost savings.** Meat can be a high-cost item, so including more meatless sources of protein in the diet can help save cash.
- **Health perks.** Plant-based diets are associated with lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, a reduced risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes, and a lower incidence of cancer.¹ Even cutting back on meat can result in these positive effects.
- **Decreased carbon footprint.** Diets higher in plant-based foods and lower in animal-based foods are associated with reduced environmental impact, including fewer greenhouse gases emissions, and less energy, land and water use.²

Sources:

1. Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics. 2009. Position of the American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets.
2. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP). 2015. Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/10-chapter-5/>. Accessed March 16, 2016.

*Food allergen