

Do you need a diet higher in protein?

You may need more protein if you are:

1. On a weight-loss diet
2. Weight-loss surgery patient
3. Over 50 years old
4. Physically active, weather an athlete or just beginning an exercise program

Why do you need protein?

1. To maintain muscle mass. Physical activity and aging cause muscle breakdown, and the body rebuilds muscles from protein in the diet.
2. To support metabolism. Muscle mass drives the body's calorie use. The more muscle mass, the more calories you need to maintain your muscle.
3. To account for increased needs and less efficient absorption of protein. Weight-loss surgery changes the way your body can accept food by decreasing the absorptive surface area, which means that small, frequent meals with protein will better meet your nutritional needs.

How much protein do you need each day?

To calculate your protein needs if you have higher requirements, multiply your body weight in pounds by 0.5 (moderate) to 1.0 (high) to get the number of grams of protein per day. For example: If you weigh 250 in pounds, multiply 250 by 0.5=120 grams of protein per day for moderate intake or multiply 250 by 1.0=250 grams for higher intake. People not needing these higher amounts can multiply their body weight by 0.5 to 0.8 to get their recommended grams of protein per day.

What is the best way to eat enough protein?

Divide your protein intake for the day for better absorption. Take the total amount of protein calculated above and eat servings from an excellent source three to six times daily. So, if you need 125 grams of protein each day, you can start with six small meals, each containing 21 grams of protein. Use the chart below to calculate grams of protein from excellent protein sources.*

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	GRAMS OF PROTEIN/SERVING
Lean Meat (beef, pork, chicken, turkey, lamb)	3 ounces	15-18
Fish (omega-3-fatty-acid-rich salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines, or other fish, or shrimp, crab, lobster)	3 ounces	18-21
Eggs, Egg Substitute or Egg Whites	2 medium or 3 whites	11
Legumes (pintos, black beans, garbanzos, kidney, red beans, and others)	1 cup	12-15
Soy (tofu- 1 cup, soy milk- 12 ounces, soy nuts- 1/2 cup, cooked soybeans- 1/2 cup, soy protein powder- 1 ounce)	N/A	11-16
Whey Protein Powder	1 ounce	23

*Data from www.usda.gov