

Protein

Surgery Increases Protein Demands in the Body

Getting extra protein is especially important after surgery because the body needs it to make immune cells and antibodies, to reduce inflammation and to mend the wound at the site of incision. Without enough protein from food, the body must make its own by breaking down muscle and organ tissue, sapping immunity. As a result, poor nutrition can delay recovery.

Recommendations for Protein Intake

Protein Needs for the Average Individual

A healthy person should consume .08 gram protein/ kg of body weight.

A quick equation to remember is 1 gram protein/ 3 pounds of body weight.

40 grams for a 120 pound person

50 grams for a 150 pounds

60 grams for 180 pounds

Protein Needs after Surgery

The highest protein demand for healing purposes is in the first few weeks post-op. Approximately 60–80g/ protein per day is recommended for nutritional adequacy and for wound healing after surgery, depending on the extent of your surgery.

Protein Requirements for Post Surgical Patients

1.5-2.0 grams protein/ kg of body weight.

A quick equation to remember is 1 gram/ 2 pounds body weight.

60 grams for a 120 pound person

75 grams for a 150 pound person

90 grams for a 180 pound person

All Protein is Not Alike

Some of the protein you eat contains all the amino acids needed to build new proteins. This kind is called complete protein. Animal sources of protein tend to be complete. Other protein sources lack one or more "essential" amino acids—that is, amino acids that the body can't make from scratch or create by modifying another amino acid. Called incomplete proteins, these usually come from fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts.

Vegetarians need to be aware of this. To get all the amino acids needed to make new protein people who don't eat meat, fish, poultry, eggs, or dairy products should eat a variety of protein-containing foods each day. Beans and rice, or hummus (sesame tahini +garbanzo beans), or flour tortilla and cheese are good examples of complete proteins (also called 'Complimentary Proteins').

Get a good mix of Proteins. Almost any reasonable diet will give you enough protein each day. Eating a variety of foods will ensure that you get all of the amino acids you need.

Fish & Seafood: Seafood is one of the best sources of protein because it's usually low in fat. Fish such as salmon is a little higher in fat but it is the heart-healthy kind: omega-3 fatty acids.

White-Meat Poultry: Stick to the white meat of poultry for excellent, lean protein. Dark meat is higher in fat. The skin is loaded with saturated fat, so remove skin before cooking.

Milk, Cheese, Yogurt: Not only are dairy foods excellent sources of protein but they also contain valuable calcium. Choose skim or low fat dairy.

Eggs: Eggs are one of the least expensive forms of protein. 6 egg whites have only 100 calories and are an extremely lean source of complete protein.

Beans: One-half cup of beans contains as much protein as 3 ounces of broiled steak. Plus, these nutritious nuggets are loaded with fiber to keep you feeling full for hours.

Pork Tenderloin: This great and versatile white meat is as lean as chicken breast.

Soy: Combine soy protein foods like tofu with a healthy low fat diet.

Lean Beef: Lean beef has only one more gram of saturated fat than a skinless chicken breast. Lean beef is also an excellent source of zinc, iron and vitamin B12.

Protein on the Go: Grab a meal replacement drink, cereal bar or energy bar. Check the label to be sure the product contains at least 6 grams of protein, 4 grams of fiber and does not contain high fructose corn syrup.

Protein Quick Reference

Food,	Amount,	Protein
Fish,	3 oz,	21 grams
Chicken,	3 oz,	21 grams
Turkey,	3 oz,	21 grams
Meat,	3 oz,	21 grams
Milk,	8 oz,	8 grams
Tofu,	3 oz,	15 grams
Yogurt,	8 oz,	8 grams
Cheese,	3 oz,	21 grams
Peanut butter, 2 tbsp,		8 grams
Protein Bar. 3 oz,		22 grams *
Protein Powder, 1 serving		22 grams *
Eggs,	2 large,	13 grams

*Protein Content will vary per brand