

# A Refresher on Protein Basics

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**A Refresher on Protein Basics** Protein has become synonymous in our consciousness with meat, strength and muscle. In America, the term 'Protein' is typically used interchangeably with meats. In China, the translated words for protein actually refer to egg whites, recalling images of bodybuilders and

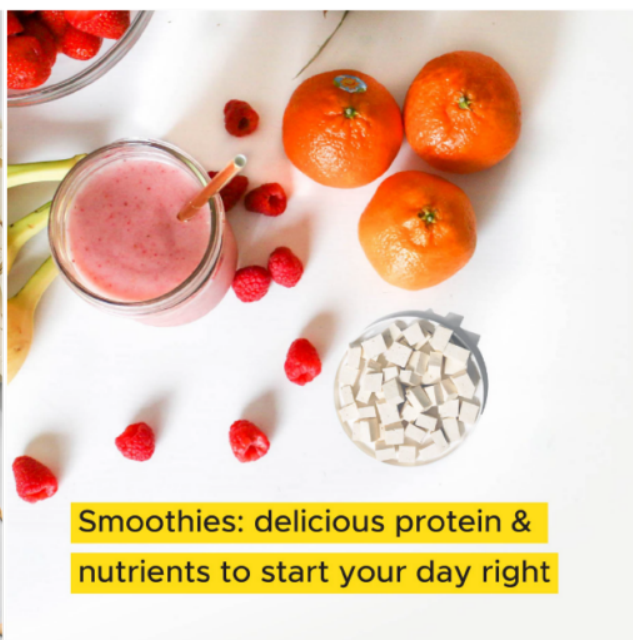
their weightlifting diets. The 2018 documentary Gamechangers valiantly tried to blow this myth and even showed veganism not just a contributor to wellness but also to incredible human endurance, strength and vitality.

Yes, protein is a critical macronutrient our body needs along with carbohydrates, fats and fiber and we get them from the foods we eat. Apart from its role in muscle building, protein also plays a key role in regulating blood sugar absorption, our immune system, digestion, hormone regulation, even blood pressure!

So, how much do we really need?

1. Take our body weight in kilograms and multiply by 0.8. That's the number of grams of protein we need daily. As a thumb rule that's about 50 grams of protein per day.

2. Each gram of protein has 4 calories. So, 50 grams of proteins delivers 200 calories. That is 10% of an average 2,000-calorie daily diet. Calories from protein should make up 10%-20% of daily calories. Ideally, no more, no less.



**Soyabeans: your one-stop protein source, in many delicious forms**

Soyabeans are, quite simply, the highest source of plant

protein. Just 1 cup of cooked soybeans provides 30g of protein (58% DV). They also contain unique proteins called 'peptides' that improve blood pressure, control sugar and improve immune function. Studies also reveal that soy protein reduces cholesterol, LDL and triglycerides. Enjoy this superfood in many delicious forms – whole steamed beans, fermented tempeh or tofu, soy milk or flour.

### **Smoothies: delicious protein & nutrients to start your day right**

For more protein variety in your smoothies, consider going beyond milk or yogurt and use silken tofu. Its smooth texture & neutral taste combines well with any fruits, veggies and nuts. What's more, just quarter cup tofu provides around 10% daily value protein. Silken tofu blends best, but place in a blender first and give it one churn before adding other ingredients. Deliciously healthy!



### **Sprouts: high protein source that's also more bioavailable**

When seeds begin to sprout, their enzymes are rapidly converting nutrients into easily available forms for the growing plant, including protein – the 'growth nutrient'. So when we eat sprouted beans, we actually get a high load of protein in an easily digestible form, making it more

'bioavailable'. A  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sprouted chickpeas contains 9g protein compared with 4g in the same serving of unsprouted cooked chickpeas.

## Your cheat sheet on protein portions

For a 60kg adult, the daily recommended intake is about 50g of protein – what does that actually look like? Here's a quick way to visualise 25g of protein (half daily intake):

- 1 cup of plain or Greek yogurt or cooked lentil
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup tofu or cooked black beans
- 2 slices wholemeal bread spread thickly with peanut butter
- 4 cups of soy milk
- 4 heaped tbsp of roasted peanut

Don't forget that protein is present in most foods like brown rice and broccoli. Here's a guide for a day's worth of protein on your plate:

Breakfast:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup yogurt with mixed fruit and 12 pieces of almond (15g protein)

Lunch: 1 cup pasta with pesto sauce with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chickpeas (15g protein)

Dinner: 2 cup lentil soup with 1 whole wheat roll and an arugula salad (19g protein)



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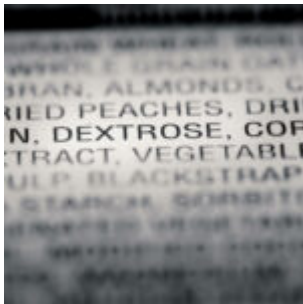


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