

Protein and Diabetes

Why is Protein Important in Diabetes Management?

- Helps you reach a healthy body weight.
- You need more protein to prevent muscle loss when your blood sugar is high.
- Slows digestion so you feel full longer and keeps your blood sugar stable.

How much protein do you need?

- Your weight in kg x 1.0-1.2 g/kg = grams protein you need per day.
- Aim to include a protein food at each meal and snack.

Example: Someone who weighs 80kg (175 lbs) needs 80-95g protein per day. If they eat 3 meals per day, they would need ~25-30g protein per meal.

Where do I find protein?

Foods high in protein include lean meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, legumes (beans, peas, lentils), nuts, tofu, low fat cheese, milk & yogurt. Protein is also found in protein powders and nutritional supplements.

Food	Serving	Protein
Soybeans	150 g (¾ cup)	17 g [6 g carbohydrate]
Edamame, shelled*	160 g (1 cup)	18 g [9 g carbohydrate]
Firm tofu	200 g (¾ cup)	16 g
Soft tofu	195 g (¾ cup)	9 g
Tempeh*	131 g (¾ cup)	24 g [7 g carbohydrate]
Hummus*	80 mL (1/3 cup)	7 g [7 g carbohydrate]
Beans, lentils, cooked*	175 mL (¾ cup)	12 g [20 g carbohydrate]
Cheese (<20% M.F.)	30 g (1oz)	7 g
Paneer	30 g (1oz)	5 g
Cottage cheese (1% M.F)	168 g (¾ cup)	21 g
Greek yogurt (0-2% fat)	175 mL (¾ cup)	15 - 18 g
Yogurt (0-2% fat)*	175 mL (¾ cup)	7 g [12 g carbohydrate]
Cow's milk (skim, 1%)*	250 mL (1 cup)	8 g [12 g carbohydrate]
Peanut butter (natural)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	7 g

Walnuts (Black)	60 mL (¼ cup)	7 g
Walnuts (English)	60 mL (¼ cup)	4 g
Almonds	60 mL (¼ cup)	7 g
Pistachio nuts*	60 mL (¼ cup)	6 g [6 g carbohydrate]
Pumpkin seeds	60 mL (¼ cup)	9 g
Soy nuts	½ cup (50g)	21g [7 g carbohydrate]
Hemp hearts	2 Tbsp	7 g
Meat, poultry, fish, cooked	90 g (3 oz)	21 - 28 g
Egg, whole	2 large	12 g
Egg, white	¼ cup	7 g
Soy milk (unsweetened)	250 mL (1 cup)	8 g
Protein powder (unsweetened)	1 scoop (20 g)	15 - 30 g

* Food items contain carbohydrate (7-15g per half cup) but raise blood glucose less than most other carbohydrate foods. Be mindful of the serving size.

Note: Other milk alternatives such as almond, cashew and rice milk are not high sources of protein.

Tips to Increase Protein:

- Eat protein with all carbohydrate containing foods
- Add nuts to salad, baked goods, yogurt, cereal, oatmeal, rice, pasta
- Add protein powder into smoothies, cream soup, homemade baked goods
- Have plain low fat Greek yogurt as a snack
- Add low fat cheese (<20% M.F.) to sandwiches, wraps, salads, omelettes and shred on top of casserole dishes
- Add meats, poultry or fish, seafood into cooking
- Add crumbled tofu to chili and grilled tofu to salads; blend soft tofu into soups and sauces
- Try a low sugar granola bar high in protein (<15g carb, >7g protein per bar)
- Use hummus as a spread on sandwiches, wraps, crackers or as a dip for vegetables
- Add beans and lentils to soups, salads, pasta sauce, scrambled eggs

Note: If you have kidney disease talk to a physician/dietitian about your protein needs because they may need to be personalized.