

The Power of Protein



Protein is an essential part of a healthy balanced diet. It helps maintain muscle strength, which is even more important as we get older as we naturally start to lose muscle mass after the age of 30 yrs. Its also essential for the growth and repair of all tissues, and in supporting our immune system.

Older adults are also more prone to inflammation, injuries and chronic diseases which increases our protein needs. Meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy provide protein from animal sources, but you can also get plenty from plant sources such as beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, soy, and whole grains. Ideally, we should spread our protein consumption throughout the day, so here are some high protein meal ideas to boost your intake and keep up your strength!

Breakfast

Omelettes - Jazz up this breakfast staple with some creative fillings :-

- 2 tbsp pesto and 5 halved cherry tomatoes
- A handful of wilted kale and 25g goats cheese or feta
- A few slices of avocado and a handful of wilted spinach

Quick and easy yoghurt pot – Add your favourite fruit, nuts and seeds to 150ml natural or Greek yoghurt. Try 125g berries, 1 tbsp toasted flaked almonds and 1 tbsp milled flax seeds. Or 1 chopped apple with 1 tbsp walnuts and 1 tsp honey. Or go tropical with 1 tbsp of desiccated coconut, the pulp of a ½ passion fruit and ¼ chopped mango.

Lunch

It's a wrap – Spread 60g of hummus over a tortilla wrap. Top with sliced chicken, goats cheese or tuna. Add sliced red pepper, cucumber and a handful of spinach and a dollop of mayo or ketchup and roll into a delicious hand held lunch! Grill for a couple of minutes on each side if you like a bit of crunch.

Protein packed salads – Roast 75g of chickpeas, drizzled with olive oil in the oven for 20 mins. Add 20g of walnuts to the roasting chickpeas for the final 5 mins. Alternatively roast a salmon fillet. Combine a handful of spinach and rocket, chopped cherry tomatoes, cooked beetroot, grated carrot and drizzle with your favourite salad dressing. Top with a poached egg for an additional protein punch!

Dinner

Beef up your bolognese – Add 60g of drained and rinsed tinned lentils and 60g green peas per person to your usual mince bolognese sauce and serve over pasta. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese for an extra protein boost.

Get creative with quinoa – a seed that's high in protein and can be used in place of rice. Ready cooked quinoa in pouches are quick and easy and can be served with grilled or roasted chicken strips and roasted vegetables for a healthy and filling dinner.

Here is the protein content of common foods per 100g

Animal sources			Plant sources		
Meat	Chicken breast	32g	Pulses	Red lentils	7.6g
	Pork chop	31.6g		Chickpeas	7.2g
	Beef steak	31g	Beans	Tofu	8.1g
	Lamb chop	29.2g		Kidney beans	6.9g
Fish	Tuna (tinned)	24.9g		Baked beans	5.0g
	Salmon	24.6g	Grains	Wheat flour	12.2g
	Cod	23.9g		Rice	10.9
	Mackerel	20.3g		Bread (brown & white)	7.9g
Eggs	Chicken egg	14.1g		Pasta	4.8g
Dairy	Milk	3.5g		Porridge oats	3.0g
	Cheddar Cheese	25.4g	Nuts	Almonds	21.1g
	Reduced fat cheddar	27.9g		Walnuts	14.7g
	Cottage cheese	9.4g		Hazelnuts	14.1g
	Plain greek style yoghurt	5.7g	Seeds	Pumpkin seeds	19g