

Protein: All Your Questions Answered

1. How much protein do I need each day?

This depends on your age, weight, and activity level. To keep things simple, optimal protein is calculated as: 1g/kg of IDEAL body weight/day

| Age | Daily Protein Needs (approx.) | Lifestage Considerations |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Children (1 - 13 yrs) | 15 - 40 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth spurts • Puberty starts |
| Teens (14 - 18 yrs) | 40 - 70 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid growth • Hormonal changes |
| Adults (19 - 64 yrs) | 50 - 80 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perimenopause, menopause • Slower metabolism |
| Older adults (65+) | 70 - 100 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle loss accelerated |
| Pregnancy/breastfeeding | 70 - 95 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of baby • Support of mother • Milk production & recovery |
| Athletes/Recovery | 90 - 140 g/day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and recovery • Tissue repair |

2. Which foods are high in protein?

| Food (serving size) | Protein (g) | Other nutrients |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Chicken breast (100g) | 31 g | B vitamins, iron |
| Beef (100g, lean steak) | 25- 27 g | B vitamins, iron |
| Salmon (100g) | 20 - 22g | Omega-3 fatty acids, vit D |
| Lentils (1 cup cooked) | 18 g | High fibre, plant-based, iron |
| Greek yoghurt (¾ cup) | 17g | Calcium, probiotics |

3. Is too much protein bad for the body?

For healthy adults, protein is safe and beneficial, supporting muscle and overall health. Intakes up to ~2 g/kg/day are generally fine, but extremely high amounts or pre-existing kidney/liver issues can cause strain. Balance protein with fibre, vegetables, and healthy fats to maintain digestive comfort and overall nutritional wellbeing.

4. What happens if I don't get enough protein?

If you don't get enough protein, your body may struggle to repair tissues, build and maintain muscle, produce important enzymes and hormones, and support immune function.

Over time, this can lead to fatigue, muscle loss, slower wound healing, weakened immunity, hair and nail problems, and general poor recovery from illness or injury.

5. Do I need animal protein, or can I get enough from plants?

You don't need animal protein to meet your protein needs - it's possible to get enough from plants, but it requires planning. Plant proteins (beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, quinoa, nuts, seeds) can provide all essential amino acids if you eat a variety throughout the day. Animal proteins are complete, but plant-based diets can be equally effective for muscle, recovery, and overall health.

6. How can you test if you have enough protein?

Blood test markers such as albumin, total protein, and urea nitrogen can tell us if there is a lack of protein, absorption issues, and whether the body is breaking down protein efficiently.

7. Do I need protein powder? Or can I get enough from food?

Protein from food is sufficient for most people. However, supplementing with protein can be beneficial for those who are: struggling to meet your daily protein needs through food, are highly active, older or need to prevent muscle loss, or are recovering from illness or surgery.

8. What is the difference between whey and plant-based protein?

Whey protein, from milk, is fast-absorbing, and ideal for muscle growth, but unsuitable for vegans or those with lactose intolerance. Plant-based proteins, from sources like pea, rice, or soy, are slower-digesting and may need combining to be complete, but are vegan-friendly, gentle on digestion, and contain additional fiber and nutrients.