



Increased Protein Needs

Protein is used as a building block for the body. It is important for the body to function correctly, and there must be enough protein in the body to:

- Build and maintain bone, muscle, and skin
- Heal wounds
- Promote growth
- Maintain or gain weight
- Resist or fight infection



Where does protein come from?

Protein can be found in most animal products (meat, fish, cheese, milk, yogurt, etc.). There are also vegetarian sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, seeds, and soy. Some easy ways to increase protein intake include:

- Melt cheese on sandwiches, hamburgers, or vegetables
- Use cottage cheese or yogurt as a dip for raw fruits and vegetables
- Add beans to soup and other dishes
- Have 3 servings of dairy a day
- Choose meals with meat or fish in them
- Sprinkle nuts or seeds on fruit, cereal, or ice cream
- Spread peanut butter on sandwiches, toast, fruit slices, or raw vegetables, such as carrots, cauliflower, and celery

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How much protein is needed?

The amount of protein needed varies depending on age, body size, activity level, and state of health. On average, older adults need 1 gram of dietary protein per kilogram of body weight a day. Some individuals may need more protein than others. A few reasons why protein needs increase include:

- Post-surgery
- Cancer
- Weight loss
- Open wounds
- Infection
- Certain medical conditions



Commercial nutritional supplements such as Ensure or Boost can help increase protein intake. Food is the preferred source of protein, however these can help for those with decreased appetite, or who find it difficult to consume adequate amounts of food. These can often be purchased in grocery stores or pharmacies.

There are also some reasons why the body would need less protein.

Check with a dietitian or doctor for your specific dietary needs.

Additional Notes: