

# A Guide for making healthier choices

## FOUNDATION STRATEGY # 4 - BE A PROTEIN “PRO”

Protein is one of the six basic nutrients required by your body. It is vital to your good health; protein has a number of main roles in your body:

- It supports the growth of your body’s tissues.
- It is used to help maintain and repair a wide variety of tissues including your skin, hair and muscles, for example.
- It can be used to help make energy for your body.
- Protein is also involved in muscle contractions, which is the way your muscles move your body.
- Enzymes are proteins found within your body that “speed up” chemical reactions.
- Proteins are also present in the form of antibodies, which your body uses to “defend” itself against illness.

There are many different types of foods that are considered good sources of protein. These foods can be divided into two main categories:

- Protein from animal sources – This group of protein foods includes meats like beef, pork, chicken, turkey, lamb, fish and other types of seafood. Eggs, milk, cheese, and other dairy products are also good sources of protein that come from animals.
- Protein from non-animal sources – These sources of protein mostly come from certain kinds of plants or vegetables such as peas (chick peas, split peas), beans (kidney, soybeans, romano) and lentils. These types of foods are also called legumes. Tofu (made from soybeans), peanut butter, other nuts and certain seeds can also be good sources of protein.

Besides supplying protein, many of these foods can also provide other nutrients such as fat, carbohydrates, vitamins (such as Vitamin B12), and minerals (such as iron or calcium). For example, milk is a good source of protein as well as an excellent source of the mineral calcium, as well as other vitamins and minerals.

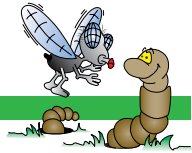
At this time in your life when your body is still growing and developing, you need to have 6-9 ounces (170-250 grams), or 2-3 servings of protein foods each day. In the table below, you will see some examples of different protein foods and the amount you would have to eat to get 1 serving.

Generally speaking, 1 serving of meat is about the same size as a deck of playing cards or a computer mouse.

**Table 1: Examples of Serving Sizes for Protein Foods**

TYPE OF PROTEIN FOOD	ONE (1) SERVING EQUALS
Ground beef (hamburger)	100g / 3oz.
Chicken / Turkey	100g / 3oz.
Beef, Pork (steaks, chops, etc.)	100g / 3oz.
Fish – including canned Tuna or Salmon	100g / 3oz. – about 1/2 of can
Eggs	1-2 (depending on size)
Baked Beans (canned)	125ml / 1/2 cup
Tofu	100g / 1/3 cup
Peanut Butter	2 tbsp. / 30ml
Cottage Cheese	250ml / 1 cup
Kidney Beans	125-250ml / 1/2 - 1 cup

# A Guide for making healthier choices



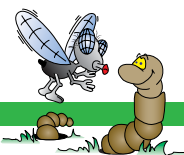
As you can see, the amount you will have to eat to get one serving of a protein food depends on what you are eating. Remember, the idea in this Foundation Strategy is to eat 2-3 servings per day. Generally, by including some type of protein food at breakfast, lunch and dinner, you can usually do this pretty easily.

For example:

<b>Breakfast</b> – 1 cup (250ml / 8oz.) of low-fat milk + 1 tbsp. Peanut Butter on whole-grain toast = <b>1 serving</b>
<b>Lunch</b> – Tuna sandwich made with a 1/2 can of tuna and a bit of low-fat mayo) = <b>1 serving</b>
<b>Dinner</b> – 3oz. (100g) of grilled chicken (roughly 1/2 of a breast piece about the size of a computer mouse = <b>1 serving</b>
<b>TOTAL SERVINGS FOR THE DAY = 3 servings</b>

Seems easy, huh? Well, it is. But there are a few more things to think about:

- Although you may already be involved in making some of your own meals, chances are that someone else makes most of your meals, especially dinner. In order for you to be able to take responsibility for making your own healthy choices, you will probably need to let your Mom, Dad, or whoever it is, know what's involved in this Foundation Strategy – being a protein “Pro.” You will need to talk about grocery shopping, meal planning and preparation, and what you want to do to eat healthier.
- Choose low-fat sources of protein. Choose meats that are lean. This is important because foods such as meat, eggs and cheese can contain a lot of saturated fat. Eating too much saturated fat has been linked to increased risks for heart disease and some types of cancer. The fat content of meat can vary depending on the type of meat and the “cut” of the meat (that is, where it comes from on the animal). Of course, the way meat is cooked or prepared can also affect its fat content.
- For beef and pork – Avoid cuts of meat that are marbled. To know what we mean here, go to a grocery store and take a look at the meat section where they sell hamburger, steaks and pork chops. Take a look at a T-bone steak or some hamburger – you may see a lot of white “streaks” or “flecks” throughout the redness of the meat. Those white spots or flecks are the fat in the meat. Choose meats without a lot of marbling.
- For chicken and turkey – Do not eat the skin from chicken or turkey. Trim away any excess fat before cooking and eating.
- Most types of ocean fish (like sole, cod, haddock, and halibut to name a few of the more common kinds) are low in fat to begin with. This makes them excellent sources of lean protein at any time. Other types of fish like salmon or tuna can be oilier which makes them higher in fat. However, unlike the fat in beef, pork or chicken, the oil (fat) from salmon or tuna is actually good for you, as long as it is eaten in balance and moderation.
- Choose cold cuts and “processed” meats less often. These can include things like pepperoni, salami, bologna (baloney), hams, wieners (hot dogs), sausages, bacon, and other types of processed meats. Although these meats are also sources of protein, they are also usually higher in fat (saturated), salt and preservatives or other additives. However, you can buy leaner and healthier choices of cold cuts and other processed meats at most grocery stores, although you may have to ask specifically for them. Other ways to cut down on processed meats include things like ordering vegetarian pizza instead of one with meat.
- Try some vegetable proteins – Expand your eating horizons! There are many alternatives to meat that are good



# A Guide for making healthier choices

sources of protein including things like beans (for example, kidney or romano beans), peas (for example, split peas, garbanzo beans) lentils, tofu (soybean), peanut butter and other nuts and seeds. In order to make vegetable proteins healthier, or more “complete,” they need to be combined with whole grains (like beans with brown rice, peanut butter on whole wheat or whole grain toast).

- Dairy products – like milk, cheese and yogurt – can also be good sources of protein. However, foods from this group should be lower in fat. Choose lower fat milk (skim, 1%, 2%) and yogurt (with less than 1% fat). Lower fat cheese (sometimes called “light” cheese) can also be bought now at most grocery stores. Choose cheese with 20% M.F. or less printed on the packaging. Choose low-fat (1%, 2%) cottage cheese.
- Be wise about fast food – Hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken sandwiches, pizza, and so on are also sources of protein because of the meat they contain. However, these choices can also often contain a lot of excess fat and empty calories. Although these foods are fast, they are not necessarily healthy. You do have other choices or alternatives to the typical higher fat hamburgers and hot dogs and so on. Most fast food places offer lower fat, or leaner choices on their menus. Sometimes, it is a matter of asking or just choosing to be a little different. Don’t get the higher fat version just because it’s what everyone else ordered.
- The way that your protein choice is prepared – broiled, baked, fried, grilled – can also make a difference in how healthy it is. Generally, preparing meats by deep frying, frying or breading (which is usually followed by frying) should be chosen less often. Grilling and broiling are usually better because any excess fat in the meat can then drip away. Baking is also pretty good, unless the meat is baked in butter or some other high-fat sauce or gravy. There are many ways that meats, as well as many other foods, can be prepared without additional fat.

Use the list below to make healthier “meat” choices:

**Table 2: Making Healthy Protein Choices or “How to be a Protein Pro”**

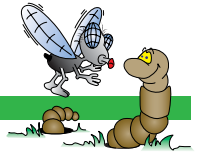
Healthy Choices CHOOSE MORE OFTEN	Less-Healthy Choices CHOOSE LESS OFTEN
Chicken without the skin	Fried Chicken
Turkey without the skin	Regular Ground Beef
Lean Beef (with no marbling)	High-fat cold cuts
Lean Pork (with no marbling)	Sausages, wieners, hot dogs
Fish (fresh, frozen, canned) e.g., tuna, salmon, cod, sole	Processed Meats
Vegetable sources – tofu, beans, lentils, peas, peanut butter – combine with whole-grains	Beef or pork with a lot of marbling or excess fat
Low-fat dairy products – milk, yogurt	High-fat dairy products

The main message here is something that you’ve seen before.

Take control.

Be responsible for making your own good choices when it comes to sources of protein. Keep your choices lean, or lower in fat. Be wise about the fast food choices you make. Become involved in planning, shopping and maybe even preparing meals. It’s really not difficult and you are worth it!

# A Guide for making healthier choices



## Lunchbox #1: What exactly is meat anyway?

Are you sure you want to know? It might sound gross, but meat is the flesh of animals. There are two main categories of meat.

- 1) Muscle meats – Examples would be chicken breast, steak, pork chops, fish and so on. When you eat these kinds of meat, you are actually eating the muscle of the animal. Muscle meats are excellent sources of protein and some other nutrients such as Vitamin B12 and iron. Some muscle meats can be very fatty, depending on how the animal was raised on the farm and where the meat comes from on the animal. Try to choose lean, or low-fat, meat as often as possible.
- 2) Organ meats – Examples include things like liver, brains, kidneys and heart. Although you may not be a fan of these kinds of meat, many people do eat them. However, some organ meats such as liver, can contain a lot of cholesterol in addition to protein, vitamins and minerals. As a rule, organ meats should not be consumed on a regular basis.

**Be a protein “PRO,”- choose lean protein – choose health.**