



2ND HELPING

Just a Little More Help from **United Way Meals on Wheels** January 2024

There's Strength in Numbers

Getting Enough Protein Is Essential to Maintaining Muscle

It's a well-known fact that we all lose muscle mass and strength as we age. You may be able to offset some of that loss, however, through exercise and nutrition. High-quality protein is essential to retaining and building muscle, but it depends on how much you consume and when. Keep reading!

▪ **What Are Healthy Sources of Protein for Seniors?**

Good examples include: lean meats, such as chicken, turkey and fish; beans and legumes, such as lentils and chickpeas; nuts and seeds, such as almonds and pumpkin seeds; dairy products, such as skim milk, Greek yogurt and cottage cheese; eggs; and protein powder and bars.

▪ **How Much Is Enough?**

The standard formula that experts use for older adults is 1.2 to 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. What does that mean in English? One kilogram equals about 2.2 pounds. So if you weigh 150 pounds, that's 68 kilograms, meaning you should probably be consuming 81 to 102 grams of protein per day. **Read product labels**, including serving size, to know what you're getting!

▪ **Is That a Lot?**

The recommended daily amount of protein increases for people as they age. This is mainly due to normal loss of muscle associated with aging, as well as weakening of bones and recent findings that mortality rates among older adults may actually decrease as a result of maintaining a higher daily intake of protein.

▪ **When Is The Best Time to Consume Protein?**

The short answer is, throughout the day – or at all three meals. So, if you're in that 150-pound range, you should be getting an average of about 90 grams of protein per day. That's 30 grams at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Consuming an evenly balanced amount, morning, noon and night, is known to enhance protein absorption, which means you're more likely to get the benefits intended.

▪ **One Last Note**

While any high-quality animal or plant protein can be beneficial, studies have shown that animal protein is the most effective at preserving muscle.

Questions for Meals on Wheels? Call us at 205.592.0413.

Source: nih.gov

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