



Live Well Newsletter



The Power of Protein

Protein is having a moment, and it's for good reason. While some focus on it for muscle-building, others view it from a weight-loss perspective. Regardless of personal goals, protein is a macronutrient essential for body function. It is made up of many building blocks called amino acids and is fundamental for good health.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–25 recommend that adults consume 10%-35% of their total calories from protein. Depending on their activity level, age and weight, some people might need more.

Some people like to calculate their protein needs in grams instead of percentages. For example, if their daily needs are 2,000 calories, protein would make up 200-700 calories, which is 50-175 grams.

Healthy protein sources include eggs, fish, lean meats and low-fat dairy. Good plant sources include nuts, seeds, beans and lentils. Health experts recommend spreading out your protein consumption throughout the day. Eating more protein at breakfast could also help decrease hunger and cravings later in the day. Keep in mind that protein shouldn't make up your entire meal; it should accompany fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Most people get enough protein from whole foods, but protein supplements are popular alternatives, especially for vegans and lactoseintolerant individuals.

Benefits of Protein

Protein is a vital part of one's diet. As such, there are several benefits of protein, including the following:

- Builds muscle mass and strength
- Strengthens bones
- Aids in injury recovery
- Reduces hunger by keeping you full for long periods
- Forms essential enzymes, hormones and vitamins

Recognizing the multifaceted importance of protein underscores the need to incorporate protein sources into your diet to maintain optimal health. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your diet or how to develop a balanced eating plan.

A Daily 5-minute Walk Could Make a Difference

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by fitness trends or goals. While research shows that 11 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise daily may lower your risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease or premature death, another health expert is praising the accessible exercise form of walking.

The National Jewish Health's director of cardiovascular prevention and wellness expressed that even a short amount of walking—just five minutes—has health benefits and supports future exercise goals. Walks improve the body's blood flow and boost creativity and productivity. Like any other exercise, walking also helps strengthen muscles and delivers oxygen to the brain and muscles.

How to Walk More Each Day

Fortunately, walking can easily be implemented into a routine. Consider the following tips for including more walking into your daily routine:

- **Make small goals.** For example, you could take a five-minute walk at lunch each day. Doing so makes you more likely to succeed in maintaining a new walking habit.
- **Walk with friends.** This encourages you to keep the habit because you know others are counting on you, and it also keeps the walks from becoming monotonous.
- **Set reminders.** Decide when to walk during the day and set reminders. It's easy to forget to take a break when you get into your work.
- **Diversify your routine.** Change your walking routes to prevent boredom, or try walking at different speeds throughout your walk.
- **Listen to your body.** Don't be afraid to take time off or modify your routine. Pay attention to your body's signals and take care of yourself so you can maintain your new routine.

The key is to make movement a regular part of your day, even if it's a five-minute walk. Talk to your doctor and discuss what works best for you to learn more about creating an active routine.

Preparing for Taxfiling Season

Tax season is here, so if you haven't done so already, it's time to gather all the appropriate information you need to file your 2024 tax returns.

The federal tax return deadline is Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

However, due to federal disaster relief, millions of Americans have extensions this year. Taxpayers in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, and parts of Alaska, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia have until May 1 to file their returns and pay taxes. The IRS also extended the deadline to Oct. 15 for victims of California wildfires.

Many people elect to file their tax returns electronically. This can be done in various ways, such as using tax preparation software or consulting a tax professional. If you are filing with a paper form, there are certain documents you must include. The documentation needed may vary based on your employment status over the past year. If you have questions about your tax-filing situation, consult with a tax professional.



The Connection Between Diet and Mental Health

Good nutrition is essential not only for physical health but also for mental well-being. The foods you eat profoundly influence your mood, cognitive function, and ability to manage stress. A healthy, well-balanced diet can help you think

The Benefits of Talk Therapy

Talk therapy, also known as counseling, can be a powerful tool for managing the mental and emotional challenges you may encounter in life. People seek therapy for a variety of reasons, whether it's navigating the loss of a loved one or

clearly and be more alert. It can also improve concentration and attention span. Just as foods can impact mental health, your mental well-being can affect the kinds of foods you eat.

Embarking on a journey toward a healthy, balanced diet begins with simple yet impactful steps. Here are some ways to empower yourself to make sustainable dietary changes that can benefit your mental health:

- **Be thoughtful about your meals.** Start by planning your meals ahead of time. Incorporate various foods rich in the vitamins and minerals your mind needs, such as omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, folate, vitamin D, and magnesium.
- **Swap processed foods for whole foods.** Aim to include more whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. These foods are often more nutrient-dense compared to processed foods.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Proper hydration is essential for overall health and can influence mood and cognitive function.
- **Listen to your body.** Pay attention to how different foods make you feel. Keep a food journal to track what you eat and how you feel afterward. This can help you identify foods that boost your mood and energy levels.

The foods you eat can significantly impact your mental health and emotional state. Eating a nutrient-rich diet low in processed sugar and saturated fat can increase your focus, improve your cognitive function, and decrease your risk for mental illnesses.

March is National Nutrition Month, so it's a great time to ensure you eat well for your body and mind. For further nutrition guidance or support, contact a registered dietitian.

simply managing daily stressors.

Talking to an unbiased professional about mental health concerns or stressors can help you navigate your problems, find solutions and learn how to cope with distress. Talk therapy offers several benefits, including the following:

- **Treatment for mental health conditions—** Talk therapy is proven to be an effective treatment for various mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, phobias and addiction) as well as past or present trauma.
- **Emotional support—** Therapy offers a safe space to discuss emotional problems with a trusted professional who can help you navigate difficult feelings.
- **Healthy coping strategies—** A therapist can teach effective coping strategies for stress and emotional distress.
- **Improved relationships—** In therapy, you can work through relationship challenges. You can also learn how to improve your communication.
- **Personal growth—** Therapy helps you recognize negative or unhelpful patterns of thoughts or behaviors, enabling you to make positive changes and facilitating personal growth and healing.
- **Stress management—** Stress can come from everyday life, such as at work, or significant life events and major transitions like divorce or the death of a loved one. A therapist can help you navigate these difficult times and provide an outlet to express your thoughts and feelings.

While talk therapy can certainly alleviate symptoms of such conditions and help with emotional distress, it's OK to try therapy at any point. Seeing a therapist before you need mental or emotional support could make it easier to deal with difficult situations that may arise in the future. Contact a mental health professional for further guidance.

— Take Charge of Your Health —



Protect Your Kidney Health

Kidneys are your body's way of filtering waste, water and other impurities from your blood. In addition to that, your kidneys perform other vital functions, such as controlling blood pressure and red blood cell production. Today, 1 in 3 U.S. adults are at risk of developing chronic kidney disease (CKD). Factors such as high blood pressure, age and family history of kidney failure increase your chances of developing CKD.

Consider the following tips to help keep your kidneys healthy:

Get tested. More than 1 in 7 adults have CKD, but many are unaware they have it. Regular screening for kidney damage or disease allows you to monitor your kidneys' health and prevent

future damage.

Eat a low-sodium diet. Sauces, lunch meats and processed foods are high in sodium, so consider low-salt or homemade options. Also, use herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavor to your food.

Stay hydrated. Water flushes sodium and toxins from your kidneys, lowering your risk of chronic kidney disease. According to the latest guidelines, men should drink about 15.5 cups of water daily, and women need 11.5 cups.

Limit nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Heavy or regular use of NSAIDs, including naproxen or ibuprofen, can cause kidney damage. Follow dosage recommendations and consult your doctor about pain management alternatives.

Exercise regularly. Just 30 minutes a day of exercise can reduce your risk of kidney disease. Exercising helps lower your blood pressure and boost heart health, both of which are critical in preventing kidney damage.

This infographic is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice.

Mediterranean Tuna Antipasti Salad

March 2025 Recipe

Makes: 4 servings



Ingredients

- ½ cup walnuts (coarsely chopped)
- ½ cup red onion (finely chopped)
- ½ cup red bell pepper (chopped)
- 10 oz. water-packed chunk tuna
- 15.5-oz. can garbanzo beans (rinsed and drained)
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley (chopped)
- 4 cups romaine hearts (shredded)

Directions

1. Place the walnuts, onion, bell pepper, parsley, tuna and garbanzo beans in a large bowl and mix lightly.
2. Whisk together the lemon juice and olive oil and drizzle over the salad. Stir lightly to coat the ingredients with dressing. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
3. Place the lettuce on a platter or divide it between salad bowls. Top with equal amounts of salad.

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	405
Total fat	23 g
Saturated fat	3 g
Cholesterol	26 mg
Sodium	362 mg
Carbohydrate	29 g
Dietary fiber	9 g
Total sugars	6 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	25 g

Source: MyPlate

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