

# Dear Health Professional,

Your patients are hearing a lot about protein—from the explosion of protein-packed supplements and snack foods to trending conversations on high-protein diets and muscle maintenance.

But with all the buzz, patients are often confused on how to make more nutritious, whole-food protein choices that support long-term health.

To help you cut through the noise, we've created a practical, evidence-based toolkit designed to support your conversations with patients around protein.



**71% of consumers are actively trying to increase the amount of protein in their diets.<sup>1</sup>**

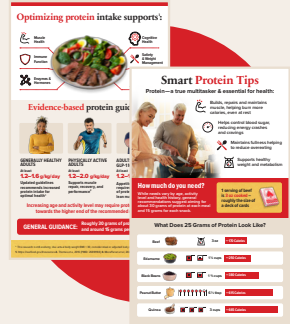
## What's Inside: Tools to Transform Your Nutrition Conversations

### ■ Health Professional Guide

An evidence-based refresher on protein, emerging scientific research on beef as a high-quality, nutrient-dense protein, and clinical takeaways for your practice.

### ■ Patient Resource

An easy-to-understand handout that empowers patients to make protein-rich, balanced, and satisfying food choices that support strength and satiety.



As a contractor to Beef Checkoff, a program supported by beef cattle farmers and ranchers, we are committed to advancing nutrition research and supporting healthcare professionals and the public with practical, evidence-based information on beef's role in a healthy and balanced diet.

We hope these tools support you in caring for your patients.

**In good health,**



**Lillie Berman, MS, RDN**

Director, Nutrition Influencer Education & Evaluation  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

**Reference:** 1. International Food Information Council 2024 Food and Health Survey (2024).

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# Optimizing protein intake supports<sup>1</sup>:



Muscle Health



Cognitive Health



Immune Function



Satiety & Weight Management



Enzymes & Hormones



Metabolic Health



## Evidence-based protein guidance:



### GENERALLY HEALTHY ADULTS

At least

**1.2–1.6 g/kg/day**

Updated guidelines recommends increased protein intake for optimal health<sup>1</sup>



### PHYSICALLY ACTIVE ADULTS

At least

**1.2–2.0 g/kg/day**

Supports muscle repair, recovery, and performance<sup>2</sup>



### ADULTS USING GLP-1 MEDICATIONS\*

At least

**1.2–1.6 g/kg/day**

Appetite reduction requires prioritization of protein to preserve lean mass<sup>3</sup>

**Increasing age and activity level may require protein intakes towards the higher end of the recommended range.**

**GENERAL GUIDANCE:** Roughly 30 grams of protein per meal and around 15 grams per snack.

\* This research is still evolving. Use actual body weight BMI < 30, consider ideal or adjusted body weight for BMI > 30<sup>3</sup>

1. <https://realfood.gov/#resources> 2. Thomas et al, 2016 (PMID: 26891166) 3. Mozaffarian et al, 2025 (PMID: 40445127)

# Not All Proteins Are Created Equal



**High-quality protein** is defined by two characteristics:

- 1 Contains all 9 essential amino acids
- 2 Highly digestible and absorbed by the body

## Study: Omnivore vs. Vegan Meal

- **Key Takeaway:** Consumption of whole-food omnivorous meal with lean beef results in ~47% greater post-meal muscle protein synthesis rates as compared to a vegan meal matched for total calories and protein in a randomized clinical trial in healthy older adults.



## Study: Protein Quality vs Quantity

- **Key Takeaway:** Animal source proteins have a higher concentration of essential amino acids, meaning they can provide more of these critical nutrients per serving and in fewer calories to help hit muscle building thresholds.



## Study: Are All Proteins Metabolically Equivalent?

- **Key Takeaway:** Animal protein foods, with higher essential amino acid concentrations, are high-quality protein sources that elicit a greater anabolic response in the body than plant protein foods. The degree of anabolic response in this study was directly related to the essential amino acid content of the food source. Results indicate that not all food sources of protein are metabolically equivalent.



Learn more and earn **2.0 free CPEUs** for RDN's by scanning the QR code

# Why Protein is Key for **GLP-1 Users**



Sufficient dietary protein intake should be a priority to help preserve muscle mass and bone density as appetite and energy intake decline.



GLP-1 use is on the rise. **Approximately 1 in 8 adults** have used a GLP-1 receptor agonist.



**Reduced appetite** and **lower energy intake** increases the risk of under-consuming key nutrients, such as protein, choline, and B12.



Consuming lean beef  $\geq 4x/week$  as part of a healthy, higher-protein, higher in dietary fiber diet, in combination with exercise, resulted in **weight loss while maintaining lean mass** over a 16 week intervention.<sup>1</sup>

**A 3 oz serving of cooked beef provides on average:**

- ✓ 25 grams of high-quality protein
- ✓ 9 other essential nutrients including iron, zinc, choline, B-vitamins
- ✓ ~170 calories



## What does this look like in practice?



80 kg (~177 lb) adult including those on GLP-1 Agonists



80 kg x 1.2–1.6 g/kg = **96-128 grams/day of protein**



Learn more about the role of **high-quality protein** in medication-supported weight loss

Reference: 1. Mozaffarian et al, 2025 (PMID: 40445127).

# Practical Protein Strategies

Simple, evidence-based recommendations to help patients optimize healthy meal planning with high-quality protein choices.

1.



Emphasize lean beef or other high-quality proteins

Maximizes essential amino acid needs without calorie creep<sup>1</sup>

2.



Encourage evenly spaced protein intake for each meal and snack

Supports consistent muscle protein synthesis<sup>2,3</sup>

3.



Pair high-quality lean proteins with high-fiber foods like whole grains and leafy greens

Creates nutrient-dense combinations that support both muscle and digestive health<sup>3,4</sup>



1 serving of beef is 3 oz cooked—roughly the size of a deck of cards

## Help Your Patients Make Better Protein Choices



### Beef

Look for Round or Loin in the cut name; they are naturally lean, e.g. sirloin



### Seafood

Enjoy two servings of seafood per week; choose fresh or frozen with no added ingredients



### Dairy

Choose options that are lower in added sugars and include at least 8 grams of protein per serving



### Plant Sources

Vary protein sources throughout the day or pair them (e.g., rice + beans) to provide all the amino acids the body needs

**Disclosure:** This resource includes a mix of findings from independent research and research supported in part by the Beef Checkoff. All referenced studies are peer-reviewed and publicly available.

1. Pinckaers et al, 2024 (PMID: 37972895) 2. Symons et al, 2009 (PMID: 19699838)  
3. Layman et al, 2015 (PMID: 25926513) 4. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 (2020).



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# Smart Protein Tips

Protein—a true multitasker & essential for health:



Builds, repairs and maintains muscle, helping burn more calories, even at rest



Helps control blood sugar, reducing energy crashes and cravings



Maintains fullness helping to reduce overeating



Supports healthy weight and metabolism

## How much do you need?

While needs vary by age, activity level and health history, general recommendations suggest aiming for about 30 grams of protein at each meal and 15 grams for each snack.

1 serving of beef is **3 oz cooked** – roughly the size of a deck of cards



## What Does 25 Grams of Protein Look Like?

Beef



3 oz

~ 170 Calories

Edamame



1 ½ cups

~ 250 Calories

Black Beans



1 ¾ cups

~ 380 Calories

Peanut Butter



6 ½ tbsp

~ 615 Calories

Quinoa



3 cups

~ 665 Calories

# Mix Up Your Protein Picks

A mix of protein sources helps you meet your daily needs and boosts overall nutrition.

**Plant proteins** like beans, peas, lentils and nuts:

- ✓ Provide a mix of protein and fiber
- ✓ Are often incomplete, without all essential amino acids
- ✓ May be more calorie-dense per gram of protein



**Animal proteins** like beef, seafood, poultry, eggs and milk:

- ✓ Are complete proteins with all essential amino acids
- ✓ Provide the highest protein quality
- ✓ Have fewer calories and more essential nutrients per gram



## Plus Up Your Protein Intake

Trail Mix



Beef Jerky

Beans



Ground Beef

Oats



Milk

## Spice Up Your Protein



### Spicy Beef Chipotle Salad

Packed with protein from lean beef and beans, this salad is a flavorful way to fuel your body!



SCAN  
FOR  
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