



# Staying Strong with Protein

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Feeling weaker as you grow older?

After age 30, adults lose about 1 percent of muscle mass per year. This is called sarcopenia. However, in some recent large studies, seniors who ate about **1/2** gram of protein per pound of body weight a day lost 32-40% less muscle mass over time.<sup>1</sup>

Why do we need protein? The primary function of protein is to repair worn-out, wasted, or damaged cells and tissues and to build new ones – including your immune cells! Protein makes up the bulk of the muscles, internal organs, brain, nerves, skin, hair, and nails, and it is also a vital part of regulatory substances such as enzymes, hormones, and blood plasma. It helps with water balance metabolism, and the body's defense system. So seniors who lose a great deal of weight from illness may have a harder time with healing and edema. When we don't eat enough calories, the protein that we eat may go to produce glucose for your brain and heart to run and not be used for protein's other functions.

**When you have a surgical wound, injury, or bedsore, you need extra protein and calories to heal!**

## Healthy Plant Proteins

Did you know that **plant** proteins are as important as **animal** proteins? Chia Seeds (Cholesterol friendly protein) in your yogurt gives you the good omega-3s' and proteins without eating the Salmon. Plus, a serving approximately the size of your thumb (or 1oz) of Chia Seeds adds 16.5 grams to the 12 grams of protein in plain low fat yogurt. Many plants are a great source of proteins like; mushrooms, lentils, and of course beans. Black eyed peas are the highest in protein, but all beans are a great source of protein.



Protein Sources

| Food                     | Grams Protein | Food                  | Grams Protein |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Meat, chicken, fish 1 oz | 7 g/          | Milk 8 oz             | 8 g           |
| Nuts 1/4c                | 6 g           | Yogurt, nonfat, plain | 12 g          |
| Egg - large              | 6 g           | Beans 1/2 c cooked    | 8 g           |

1. Nutrition Action Newsletter, CSPI, Nov. 2014