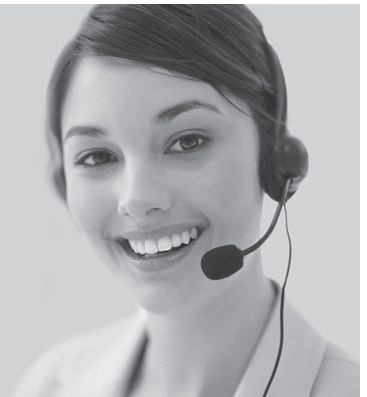


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘All About Protein Foods.’ I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

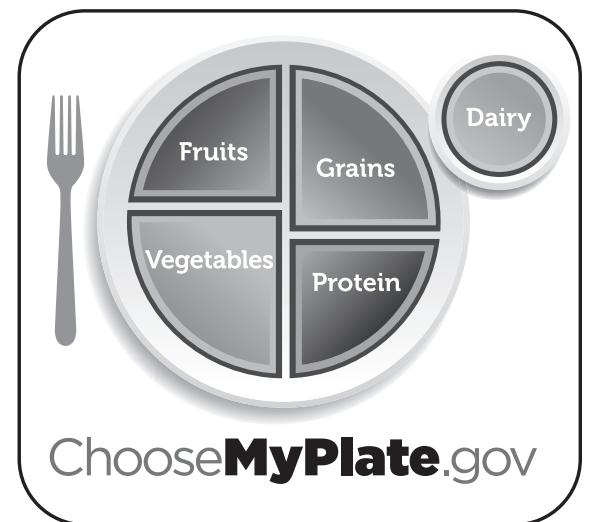
As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



MyPlate was developed in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Its purpose is to help Americans make healthy food choices. It is updated every five years based on the most recent dietary guidelines for Americans. A group of foods on MyPlate that are key to healthy eating are called “protein foods.”

What foods are in the protein foods group?

- Nuts and seeds
- Fish and seafood
- Chicken and turkey
- Meats
- Eggs
- Processed soy products such as tofu
- Cooked dried beans, split peas, and lentils*



(continued on next page)

UPMC HEALTH PLAN



A healthier life is on the line for you!

Why are protein foods important for good health?

Protein foods are a key part of healthy eating. Along with dairy foods (milk, yogurt, and cheese), protein foods are the main source of protein in the diet. The body uses protein to:

- Build and repair muscles, bones, skin, hair, and blood.
- Build the cells that fight illness and disease.
- Build the enzymes and hormones that make the body's systems work.

Protein also helps you feel full longer. Getting enough protein and including some at each meal can help you reach and stay at a healthy weight.

Protein foods are an important source of key vitamins and minerals, including iron, zinc, and vitamin B12.

- Iron carries oxygen in the blood, which is needed to produce energy and fight illness and infections.
- Zinc is needed for normal growth and development, healing wounds, and fighting infections and illnesses.
- Vitamin B12 keeps the nerve and blood cells healthy and prevents a kind of anemia that makes people tired and weak.

How much do I need?

At meals, make about a quarter of your plate protein foods.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 5½ ounces of protein foods each day for adults with an estimated daily calorie need of 2,000.

Overall, Americans eat close to the recommended amount of protein foods. An exception is teen boys and men, who eat more than recommended amounts of meats, poultry, and eggs.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

(continued on next page)

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

One ounce of protein foods equals:

- 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish.
- 1 egg.
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter.
- ¼ cup of legumes (cooked dried beans, split peas, or lentils).
- ½ ounce of nuts or seeds.

Note:

- Meats, poultry, and seafood lose about ¼ of their weight when they are cooked. For example, 4 ounces of raw hamburger weighs about 3 ounces after cooking.
- For fish, poultry, and meat, 5½ ounces cooked is a little less than two servings of about 3 ounces each. What do 3 ounces of cooked fish, poultry, or meat look like? It is about the size of a deck of cards.
- Most women's palms (from the wrist to where the fingers start) are about that size, too. Most men's palms are the size of about 4 to 5 ounces. Place a deck of cards on your hand and compare. Or use a food scale to weigh 3 ounces of cooked meat. See how that amount compares to the size of your palm.
- Check your portion of meat, poultry, or fish during lunch and dinner. Use the "palm" or "deck of cards" method above.

What to watch out for

Most Americans eat too much unhealthy fat from protein foods and not enough plant-based protein foods or fish.

The fat found naturally in meats and poultry (mainly in the skin) is mostly saturated fat. Saturated fat increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Red meats and most processed meats are especially high in saturated fat.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

(continued on next page)

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Eating processed meats, poultry, or fish or more than a moderate amount of red meat (even if fresh or lean) also increases the risk of colon or rectal cancer.

Choose plant sources of protein, fresh skinless poultry, and fresh fish more often than red meats or processed meats, poultry, or fish. When you do eat meat or poultry, lower the fat as much as possible.

The fat found naturally in plant-based foods and in fish is healthy fat. But beware! Fried foods of all kinds often contain added *trans* fat, which is unhealthy. This includes fried fish and fried plant-based protein foods, such as refried beans.

Eat plant sources of protein often.

- Plant sources include cooked dried beans, split peas, and lentils. They are rich in protein, iron, zinc, and B vitamins. Unlike meat, they are also rich in fiber. They contain very little fat, no saturated fat, and no cholesterol. They are far better for your heart than animal sources.
- Nuts and seeds are also excellent plant sources of protein. They are rich in fiber and healthy fats. But small amounts are high in calories.
 - Choose raw or dry-roasted nuts and seeds, instead of roasted, which contain added fat.
 - Limit to small handful ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 ounce) per day.
 - Use them to replace animal sources of protein, not in addition.
 - To limit sodium, choose unsalted nuts and seeds.
 - Store them in the fridge or freezer to prevent spoiling.
 - Eating plant instead of animal sources of protein costs less. It helps the environment too. Producing meat and poultry uses large amounts of land, water, and energy. It also creates much more pollution than farming plants.

Eat seafood twice a week (for a total of at least 8 ounces per week for a 2,000 calorie diet). Choose from a variety of seafood types.

- Avoid fried seafood. Fried foods are very high in fat and calories.
- Choose types of fish that are rich in healthy fats called omega-3 fatty acids. These fish include salmon, anchovies, herring, shad, sardines, Pacific oysters, trout, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel (not king mackerel, which is high in mercury).

(continued on next page)



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

An important note: Fish and shellfish concentrate mercury in their bodies. For most people, this does not pose a health concern. But high levels of mercury from fish and shellfish may harm an unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system.

How can pregnant women and young children get the health benefits of fish and be confident that they are not getting too much mercury? The Food and Drug Administration recommends that women who may become pregnant, are pregnant, or are breastfeeding:

- Eat 8 to 12 ounces of seafood per week from a variety of seafood types.
- NOT eat tilefish, shark, swordfish, or king mackerel. These types of fish are high in mercury.
- Limit white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces per week. It is higher in mercury than light tuna.
- Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught in your local area. If there are no guidelines, eat no more than 6 ounces (one average meal) per week of fish from local waters. But don't consume any other fish during that week.

What to look for on labels

Choose protein foods with:

- 0 grams of trans fat.
- 2.5% or less of the daily value (DV) for saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Also choose protein foods often that contain 5% or more of the DV for iron.

Look on the ingredient label for sources of sodium. These include salt, salty seasonings, and sodium additives. Processed meats have added sodium. So do fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been injected with a salt-containing solution.

(continued on next page)



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Meatless Eating

Would you like to try vegetarian eating? There are different types of vegetarians. “Vegans” eat no animal sources of protein. “Lacto-ovo vegetarians” eat no animal sources except for dairy products and eggs.

With a little planning, both diets can provide enough protein. Meatless sources of protein include:

- Cooked dried beans, split peas, and lentils.
- Nuts, nut butters, and seeds.
- Soy products, such as tofu, tempeh, and veggie burgers.
- Dairy products and eggs (not for vegans).

Note: You do not need to combine different protein sources in the same meal.

Regular cheese, milk, and yogurt are good sources of protein, but they are high in saturated fat. Choose nonfat or low-fat (1%) dairy products instead.

If you stop eating meat, make sure you include in your diet:

- Other sources of zinc. Examples: cooked dried beans, split peas, and lentils; breakfast cereals with added zinc; wheat germ; pumpkin seeds; and dairy products.
- Other sources of iron. Examples: breakfast cereals with added iron, spinach, turnip greens, cooked dried beans/split peas/lentils, molasses, whole wheat breads, peas and some dried fruits (dried apricots, prunes, and raisins).
 - Note: To get the most from iron-rich plant foods:
 - o Eat them with foods rich in vitamin C. Examples: citrus fruits or juices, potatoes, strawberries, cantaloupe, green pepper, tomato, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts.
 - o Cook acidic foods (such as tomato sauce) in an iron skillet.
- Other sources of vitamin B12. Examples: milk products, eggs, foods with added vitamin B12 such as many breakfast cereals, soymilk, veggie burgers, and nutritional yeast.

Ways to take action: protein foods

Review the ideas below to better match the MyPlate recommendations for protein foods. Put a check mark by one or more you would like to try this week.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

(continued on next page)

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Cooked dried beans, split peas, lentils, and soy products

- Cook dried beans, split peas, and lentils without added fat. For example, avoid adding ham, bacon, pork rinds, chitlins, or other fatty meats.
- Choose at least two or three days of the week to eat cooked dried beans, split peas, or lentils instead of meat. Try Meatless Mondays, featuring only plant-based proteins.
- Find a chili recipe you like that contains kidney beans or pinto beans. Over time, replace more of the meat with beans. Or instead of the meat, use meatless crumbles (made from soy or other beans).
- Add cubes of tofu to a stir-fry. Let stand on a paper towel-lined plate before cooking, to drain away some of the water.
- Make baked tofu. Drain away some of the water (see above). Then cut into cubes, marinate in a little sodium-reduced soy sauce, and bake at 375° until golden brown.
- Try veggie burgers and other meatless products. There are meatless substitutes for burgers, ground beef and pork, sausage patties, sausage links, chicken nuggets, corn dogs, meatballs, bacon strips, and chicken strips. (Note: Many meatless products are highly processed and high in sodium. Compare labels and choose those with less sodium. Remember to limit sodium in all your meals and snacks. Aim to stay under 2,300 mg per day.)
- Make split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups. They are easy to make in a crock-pot. Freeze leftovers in containers for lunch.
- Try vegetarian baked beans.
- Make black bean enchiladas.
- Add kidney or garbanzo beans (also known as chickpeas) to a salad.
- Make rice and beans. This main dish is rich in protein, filling, and very inexpensive.
- Find a brand of veggie burgers you like.
- Spread hummus (a dip made from chickpeas) on pita bread or low-fat whole grain crackers.

Fish

- Choose two days of the week to eat fish. Many people make a tradition of eating fish on Fridays—how about Wednesdays, too?
- Make tuna salad, using light tuna canned in water, with low-fat mayonnaise and chopped celery. Experiment with adding different fruits and vegetables. For example, try shredded carrots and halved purple grapes.
- Enjoy a salmon steak or filet.
- Make salmon loaf or patties from canned salmon.

(continued on next page)



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

- Grill or bake trout with only a small amount of oil.
- Try sardines with mustard on toast. Sardines are rich in protein and Omega-3 fatty acids and cost much less than many other protein foods.

Meat and poultry

- Choose red meat less often than skinless poultry or fish, or not at all.
- When you do eat beef, choose the leanest cuts: round steaks and roasts (round eye, top round, bottom round, and round tip), top loin, top sirloin, or chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
- When you do eat pork, choose the leanest cuts: pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, or ham.
- When you eat ground beef, choose extra lean. The label should say at least “90% lean.” You may be able to find ground beef that is 93% or 95% lean.
- Buy skinless chicken parts or remove the skin before cooking.
- Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
- Avoid or limit processed meats. When you do eat them, choose those made from chicken or turkey. Examples are turkey hot dogs, lunchmeat, and sausage. Or choose meatless products such as vegetarian hot dogs or sausage. Keep in mind that most of these meat substitutes are high in sodium.
- For sandwiches, choose lean turkey, roast chicken, roast beef, or ham instead of bologna, salami, and other luncheon meats.

Nuts and seeds

- Choose raw or dry-roasted nuts and seeds instead of roasted, which have added fats.
- Instead of cheese, choose small amounts of unsalted nuts as an appetizer, snack, or topping for main dishes.
- Instead of meat sauce, make pesto sauce for pasta with pine nuts or walnuts. Limit the amount of oil and cheese.
- Instead of butter, add a few slivered almonds to steamed vegetables.
- Instead of meat, add a small amount of toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir-fry.
- Instead of meat or cheese, add a small amount of chopped walnuts, pecans, or sesame seeds to a green salad.

(continued on next page)



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Preparing protein foods

- Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.
- Use low-fat cooking methods instead of frying. For example, bake, broil, grill, roast, poach, microwave, or pressure cook, with little or no added fat.
- Drain off and discard any fatty drippings.
- Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish. Breading adds calories. It also causes the food to soak up more fat used in cooking.

Take Action

Check when completed	
<p>My SMART* goal for this week</p> <p>Do your best to reach the SMART goal you set with your health coach. Write it here. Check the box when you have completed it.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Staying on the path to wellness</p> <p>When you are ready, choose one or two ways you will add more healthy sources of protein to your diet. Set a weekly SMART goal for each one. Write your goals here. Check the boxes when you have completed them.</p> <p>SMART Goal 1:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>SMART Goal 2:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



A healthier life is on the line for you!

*SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Timely. For example, “On Friday I will find a chili recipe that contains more beans and less ground meat than the one I usually make. I’ll shop for the ingredients on Saturday and make it on Sunday.”

SMART goals help you succeed! If you have any trouble setting your weekly SMART goals, ask your health coach for help.

The information in this tip sheet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Before making changes, always talk to your doctor about what is right for you.

Sources:

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020, Eighth Edition. Available at health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/. Accessed March 15, 2016.
- Choose MyPlate: All About the Protein Foods Group. Available at www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods. Accessed March 15, 2016.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

UPMC_17_1480
CMN17-0330-1a

UPMC HEALTH PLAN