



**For the week of
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Editor:

This column was reviewed by Sharron Coplin, registered dietitian and Ohio State University Extension nutrition associate in the College of Human Ecology.

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A little protein goes a long way

I hear a lot about keeping track of calories, fat and carbohydrates in the diet, but what about protein? (I'm trying to lose weight.)

Most likely, you're getting plenty of protein.

Just recently, the National Academies' Institute of Medicine released new Dietary Reference Intakes for macronutrients, saying adults should get 10 percent to 35 percent of their calories from protein. That's a hefty range. It means that adults who consume 1,800 calories a day should get between 180 and 630 of those calories from protein, or between 45 grams (about 1.5 ounces) and 157 grams (about 5.5 ounces) of protein a day. Most people have no problem meeting those guidelines.

But wait — maybe you want to calculate your recommended protein consumption based on your body weight, not on your calorie intake. The Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein is 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight. That means a 200-pound person (90 kilograms) should eat a minimum of 72 grams, or 2.5 ounces, of protein a day. Again, in a culture that touts quarter-pound burgers for lunch and 12-ounce

steaks for dinner, you likely don't have to worry about becoming protein-deficient.

Still, there are some indications that protein can be helpful for dieters. For one thing, protein helps give you that "filled up" feeling more than carbohydrates, fats or alcohol. That means you can eat less food (and thus, consume fewer calories) before your appetite is satisfied. Eating proteins when dieting also appears to have other benefits, including increased loss of body fat rather than muscle.

But that doesn't mean you have to go over the deep end, protein-wise, to get the benefits. Rather, try to spread your protein consumption around. Have some lean meat or nonfat dairy at each meal, and even for snacks. Choose solid proteins over liquid ones — they fill you up more. Combining protein with fiber-rich foods — whole grains or fruits and vegetables — also appears to be more satisfying. And if you're trying to lose weight, keep track of calories and increase your activity.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.