

# Protein fact sheet

## Why are proteins important?

Proteins are essential for maintaining your **muscle mass and strength, healing and physical wellbeing**.

Your body needs more protein when you have cancer, up to double the amount needed by a person without cancer.

## How do I know how much protein I should be eating?

It is recommended that while you are affected by cancer, or having cancer treatment, you should eat 1.2g – 1.5g of protein for every kg of your weight.

**For example:**

- If you weigh 55kg, you should be eating between 66g – 82.5g of protein a day.
- If you weight 70kg, you should be eating between 84g – 105g of protein a day.
- If you weigh 85kg, you should be eating between 102g – 127.5g of protein a day.

To help you with this, you will see the table below shows you how much protein you can get from different helpings of food.

## What are the benefits of eating more protein?

- Minimises loss of muscle and strength.
- Supports your time to recover from treatment.
- Supports your overall wellbeing.

## Is keeping active important too?

Yes. Keeping active can also help maintain your muscle mass and strength, and help you feel better. Try to include some activity every day, such as going for a short walk, gardening, housework or going to a gym session. Try to reduce the time you spend sitting or lying down.

## How to include a protein source at each meal time

### Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs on well-buttered toast (V).
- Porridge or cereal with full-fat milk, swirl of honey and dried fruit/seeds (V).
- Yoghurt, granola and fruit (V).

### Lunch

- Omelette, quiche or frittata with potato salad or chips (V).
- Sandwich or roll or jacket potato with egg-mayo, cold meats, tinned fish, mayo or cheese and pickle.
- Toast with cheese or beans (V) or tuna mayo or mackerel pate.
- Pasta salad (chicken, salmon or pesto).

### Evening

- Quorn or Tofu Mince pasta dish (V).
- Soya mince chilli with rice (V).
- Fish pie or shepherd's pie or cottage pie.
- Casserole (beef, pork, chicken or lamb).
- Sausage with mash and gravy.

### Snack ideas

- Sliced apple with nut butter (V).
- Crackers or oatcakes with cream cheese or cottage cheese (V).
- Buttered fruit loaf with nut butter and banana (V).
- Cherry Bakewell tart or almond slice (V).
- Fruit pot with custard (V).

\*You can modify these food suggestions to fit your dietary needs and preferences. (V) = vegetarian

Many supermarkets now offer high protein versions of foods. These include milkshakes, cereals, protein bars, puddings and yoghurts. This can make it easier for you to have the right amount of protein.

## Examples of the approximate (rough amount of) protein in foods

Food	Approx. serving	What does it look like?	Protein
Chicken	100 to 120g	About ½ large breast	25 to 30g
White Fish (bass, cod)	100-140g	1 small fillet	35-48g
Oily Fish (salmon, mackerel)	100-140g	1 small fillet	21-30g
Canned Tuna	60g	½ can or more	15-20g
Prawns	80g	25-30 prawns	14g
Beef	100g	e.g one beef burger	22.5g
Pork	100g	e.g 2 sausages or 1 pork chop	20g
Lamb	100g	e.g. 1 lamb chop	19g
Eggs	120g	2 large eggs	15g
Milk (Full fat milk)	200ml	1 glass	7g
Evaporated Milk	50g	3 tablespoons	3.8g
Nesquik Powder with Full Fat Milk	14.3g + 200ml	2 tablespoons mixed in 1 glass of milk	7.7g
Yoghurt	120-150g	1 yoghurt	5-7g
Cottage Cheese	100g	~ 3 tablespoons	9.5g
Cheddar Cheese	30g	Small matchbox-sized or 2 slices	8g
Soft Cheese	30g	~ 2 tablespoons	3.5g
Snack Cheeses (Babybel, Dairylee)	15-20g	1 segment	2-4g
Baked Beans	200g	Half a can	10g
Lentils/Chickpeas/Kidney Beans	120g	~ 6 tablespoons / ½ a can (drained)	10g
Peas	120g	~ 6 tablespoons / ½ a can (drained)	8.5g
Pate (liver, tuna, mackerel)	40-50g	See packaging	5-8g
Cheese and Chive / Feta Dip	55-60g	~ 1/3 pot	2-2.5g
Tofu	80g	See packaging	6.5g
Quorn Mince/Soya Beans	100g	See packaging	14g
Soya Milk	200ml	1 glass	6g
Soya Yoghurt	100g	~ 3 tablespoons	4g
Mixed Seeds (almond, linseed, sunflower)	28g	Roughly fit in the palm of your hand	7g
Nut Butters or Tahini	20g	~1 tablespoon	4.5g
Hummus	55g	~ 3 tablespoons	3.5g
Baba Ganoush	40-50g	~ 1/4 pot	2-2.5g
Crème Caramel or Panna Cotta	100-120g	1 pot or small slice	3-4g
Custard	130g	~1/3 can	3.6g
Rice Pudding	200g	~1/2 can	5-6g

\*Please be aware that protein quantities can differ from the amount shown depending on product type and brand.

**Speak to your dietitian if you would like further support:**

**Cancer dietitians 01273 696955 Ext. 64208**