

The Truth About Proteins

Protein is one of our three macronutrients (the other two are carbohydrates and fats) which means it provides our bodies with calories, however protein is vital to our health and vitality for many other reasons. Protein is the building block of muscle mass and plays a big role in our immune system, soft tissue growth and repair, fluid balance, hormone and enzyme production and a host of other functions. Protein also promotes satiety, which helps us feel fuller after meals.



Protein intake has been the center of many debates over the years which has led to some confusion on how much we should consume and if too much protein is harmful. Unless you currently have advanced liver or kidney disease, eating protein will not negatively impact kidney or liver health. The current RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) for protein is 0.8g per kilogram of body weight, which is roughly 7-8oz of chicken for a 150lb person per day. Recent research is showing the benefits in exceeding the RDA for protein especially if the individual is active, over the age of 65 years old, immune compromised or low body weight. I typically recommend between 20%-30% of one's calories come from quality protein sources. I do this to help preserve muscle mass during times of a caloric deficit (weight loss), and to support immune function, tissue repair and recovery from routine exercise.



It is recommended to consume high quality proteins at every meal or two meals and one snack throughout the day. Some examples of high-quality protein sources for breakfast include eggs, plain Greek yogurt, cottage cheese or protein powders in smoothies. Lunch and dinner sources can include fin fish and shellfish, pork (tenderloin is my preferred cut), poultry, and lean cuts of beef.

Vegetarians and vegans are limited with their protein selection. The only complete (*complete proteins contain all twenty amino acids*) vegetarian protein that does not contain a significant amount of carbohydrates is tofu. Other sources of protein for vegetarians or vegans are rice/whole grains combined with beans or lentils, vegan protein powders, seitan, tempeh, some nuts and seeds and nutritional yeast. I strongly encourage patient to avoid processed forms of protein, like hotdogs and meat substitutes, since they contain a high amount of processed ingredients, nitrates and fillers.

Protein is an essential part of our dietary intake and ensuring we have an adequate consumption of this nutrient throughout the day will support our health and wellness goals.

Parchment Baked Fish with Vegetables

<https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/parchment-baked-fish-tomatoes>

Makes 4 Servings, Total Time: 30 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

1. 1-8oz package of haricots verts (thin green beans)
2. 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
3. ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
4. 2 large tomatoes chopped
5. 2Tbs. of drained capers
6. 1/3 cup of green olives, quartered
7. 4, 4-5oz fresh flounder filets (cod or snapper can also be used)
8. 1tsp. of table salt
9. ½tsp. ground black pepper
10. 2Tbs. of olive oil
11. 1 lemon, quartered
12. ¼ cup of torn fresh basil

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
- Divide first 6 ingredients among 4 (17-inch) squares of parchment paper. Top each with 1 fish fillet. Sprig fish with salt and pepper; drizzle with olive oil.
- Squeeze juice from lemon over fish; place 1 lemon wedge on each fillet.
- Bring parchment paper sides up and over mixture; double fold top and sides to seal, making packets. Place all four packets on a baking sheet
- Bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until thermometer registers 145 degrees when inserted into fish.
- Place each packet on a plate and cut open. Serve immediately with fresh basil.

