

Food and Fitness

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How Much Protein Do Older Americans Need?

As aging occurs, the body changes in many ways. How the body uses protein is one of those changes. Protein is known for building and repairing muscles, bone health, and supporting the immune system. For the older American population (60 years and older), getting enough protein every day is important for staying healthy and active.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for older and younger adults is 0.8 grams per kilograms of body weight. However, emerging research suggests that the older adult population should aim for consuming about 1.0 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. Note that one pound of body weight is equal to about 2.2 kilograms. For example, a person who weighs 180 pounds needs about 82 to 98 grams of protein each day. To calculate this:

Weight in pounds / 2.2 = Low range of protein in grams

(Weight in pounds / 2.2) x 1.2 = Higher range of protein in grams



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

How Much Protein Do Older Americans Need? **1-2**

Protein Content of Common Foods **3-4**

Herbs and Spices—Chives **5-6**

Recipe—Whipped Fresh Herb Cheese **7**

Brain Exercise **8**

Monthly Observations **9**

Nutrition Counseling Contact Information **10**

How Much Protein Do Older Americans Need?

The amount of protein can also vary depending on one's health status. The 1.0 to 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight amount helps protect muscle strength and lowers the risk of falls. If an older adult is sick, recovering from surgery, has a long-term illness, or open wounds, they can require a higher amount of protein. The protein can increase up to 1.2 to 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight. The increased amount of protein allows the body to heal faster and keep the muscles from being broken down.

While most older adults eat most of their protein at dinner or at their largest meal of the day, it is best to spread protein intake across the entire day. Eating protein throughout the day can look like eating cottage cheese for breakfast, tuna for lunch, and beans or chicken for dinner. Eating protein with each meal is an easier way to meet your nutritional goals.

Protein is found in many healthy forms. Animal sources of proteins include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, and milk products. Plant-based protein sources include beans, lentils, nuts, nut butters, seeds, and tofu. Eating a mix of both animal and plant proteins can help provide important vitamins and minerals as well as protein.

Getting enough protein is important and can help older adults stay strong and heal faster. Choosing to eat protein foods throughout the day can create a better balance and achieve the recommended amounts daily. Adding plant sources of protein can increase the types of vitamins and minerals consumed. Protein foods are a great way to support the body in a healthy way.



PROTEIN CONTENT OF COMMON FOODS

	Portion Size	Grams of Protein
Meats, Poultry, and Fish		
Beef/Turkey Jerky	1 oz dried	10-15
Beef, Chicken, Turkey, Pork, Lamb	1 oz	7
Fish, Tuna Fish	1 oz	7
Imitation Crab Meat	1 oz	3
Seafood (Crabmeat, Shrimp, Lobster)	1 oz	6
Egg	1	6
Soy and Vegetable Protein		
Soy milk	8 oz	7
Edamame, fresh or frozen	½ cup	8
Edamame, dry roasted	1 oz	13
Tofu	1 oz	3
Legumes and Nuts		
Lentils	½ cup	9
Lima beans	½ cup	7
Kidney, Black, Navy, Cannellini beans	½ cup	8
Refried beans	½ cup	6
Hummus	⅓ cup	7
Chili with beans, drained	½ cup	10
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp	7
Nuts	1 oz (¼ cup)	4-6
Sunflower seeds	1 oz	5
Almond milk	8 oz	1
Milk and Dairy		
Milk, skim or 1%	8 oz	8
High protein ultra-filtered milk, fat free or 1%	8 oz	13
Yogurt, fat free, light	6 oz	5
Greek yogurt, plain, nonfat, light	5 oz	12-18
Cheese, hard (low fat)	1 oz	7
American cheese (low fat)	1 slice (0.7oz)	5
Cottage cheese, Ricotta (part skim)	½ cup	14
Sugar free pudding, made with milk	½ cup	4

	Portion Size	Grams of Protein
Grains		
Bread	1 oz slice	3
Cereal	½ cup hot ¾ cup cold	3
High protein cereals	¾-1 ⅓ cup	7-15
Rice, Pasta	⅓ cup	3
Quinoa	⅓ cup	6
Vegetables		
Fresh, frozen, canned	½ cup, 1 cup raw leafy greens	2
Fruit		
Fresh or canned fruit in 100% juice	1 small, ½ cup	0

The amount of protein in each food listed above is an average. Protein content of foods may vary slightly depending on manufacturer.

In general, 2 Tablespoons (Tbsp) or a portion of poultry, beef, pork or fish the size of 1/3 of a deck of cards would equal 1 ounce (oz) and provide about 7 grams of protein. A whole deck of cards would equal 3 ounces and provide about 21 grams of protein.

Visit the Johns Hopkins Center for Bariatric Surgery website for an electronic version of this handout and others.
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/bariatrics/nutrition-resources.html>

For more information, please contact your Nutrition Department:
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Clinical Nutrition Department at 410-550-0311
Sibley Center for Weight Loss Surgery Outpatient Nutrition at 202-243-2349

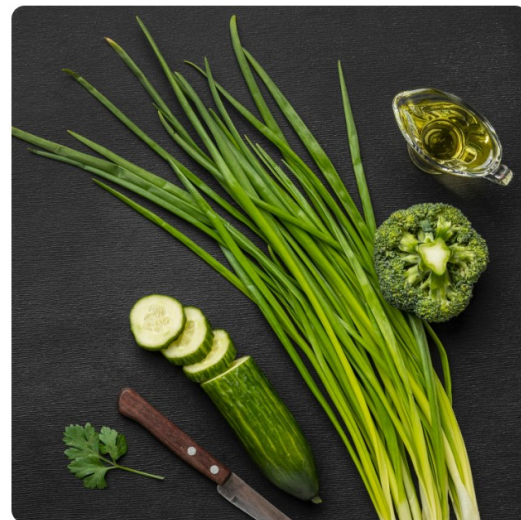
Herbs and Spices—Chives

Chives are an herb that belongs in the onion family. They are long and thin with long green leaves. They contain a light onion flavor and are often served fresh. Chives are generally sprinkled on foods right before serving to provide color, flavor, and a bit of freshness to many dishes.

Chives are mild in flavor and are often chosen because they do not overpower other ingredients. They pair well with many foods like potatoes, eggs, soups, and salads. They are also often added to cream cheese, sour cream, butter, and plain yogurt used for dips or spreads. Since their flavor is so mild, they are often chosen for topping and finishing many dishes.

Chives provide several nutrients like Vitamins A, C, and K, along with minerals such as calcium and potassium. Because they're mostly used as garnish or seasoning and served in very small amounts — often just a teaspoon — chives contribute only trace amounts of these nutrients.

While chives are small and mild, they are an easy way to add brightness and a pop of freshness to a dish. They also add a layer of nutrients to support a healthy diet.



Chives plant care printable



Grow in full sun, about 6 hours a day

Pots should have drainage holes

Use a well draining soil that is amended

Needs 1 inch of water a week

Fertilize monthly with 1/2 strength liquid fertilizer

Perennial, hardy in zones 3-9

Harvest when leaves are 6 inches tall

Chives have a delicate onion-like flavor

Remove the flowers - they are edible

Propagate mature plants by division in spring & fall



Garlic Chives

vs

Chives

SERVING SIZE	1 tablespoon (3g)	1 tablespoon (3g)
CALORIES	4	1
PROTEIN	0.29g	0.12g
CARBOHYDRATES	0.73g	0.09g
FAT	0.06g	0.01g
SATURATED FAT	0g	0g
CHOLESTEROL	0mg	0mg
IRON	1.6mg	0.2mg
ZINC	n/a	n/a
VITAMIN B12	n/a	n/a

Recipe—Whipped Fresh Herb Cheese

Ingredients

- 2 (16-ounce) containers low-fat cottage cheese
- ¼ cup fresh chives, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
- Black pepper to taste



Recipe received from: <https://www.eatright.org/recipes/snacks-and-sides/whipped-fresh-herb-cheese-recipe>

Instructions

1. Combine cheese, chives, basil, parsley, garlic and lemon juice and mix well.
2. Add black pepper to taste
3. Serve.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Serving size: ¼ cup

Serves 12

Calories: 60; Total Fat: 1g; Saturated Fat: 0g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 5mg; Sodium: 310mg; Total Carbohydrate: 3g; Dietary Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 2g; Protein: 9g; Vitamin A: 4%; Vitamin C: 6%; Calcium: 6%; Iron: 2%.

Brain Exercise

Don't just exercise your body — work out your brain!

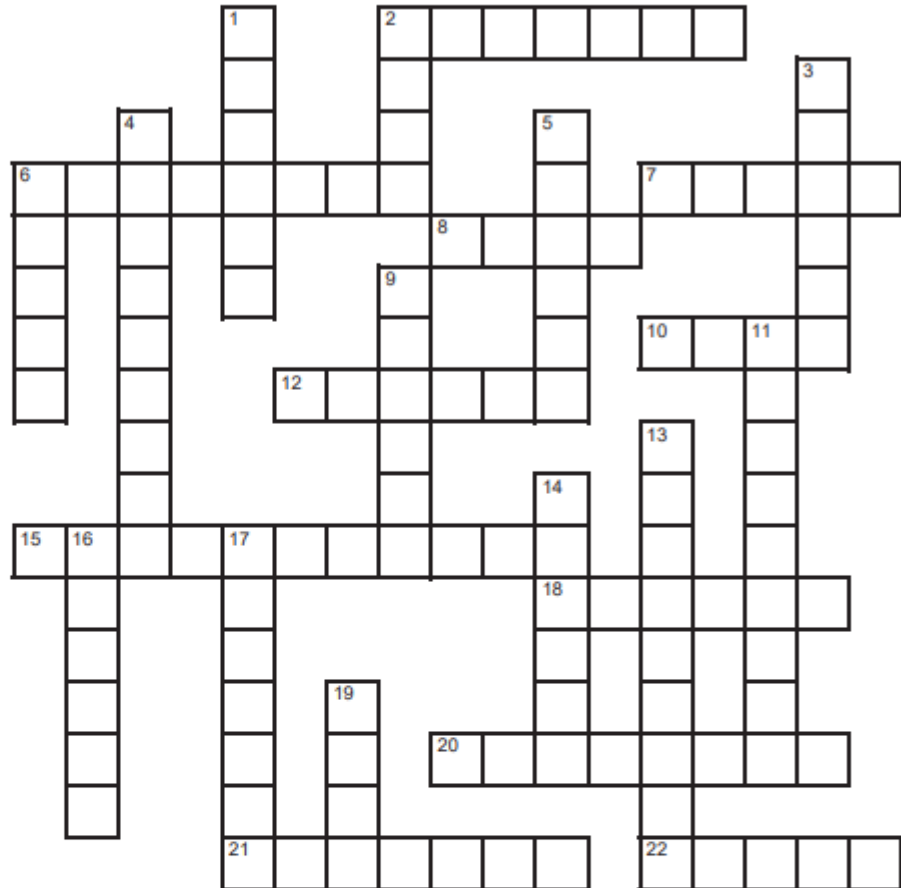
Winter Crossword

Across

2. Knitted top.
6. Snowstorm with winds.
7. Month that winter ends in.
8. When the air moves.
10. A sudden blast of wind.
12. Shake from the cold.
15. Tells you how cold it is outside.
18. Rather cold.
20. Month that winter starts in.
21. He might have a carrot for a nose.
22. Keeps you neck warm.

Down

1. Turned into ice.
2. It goes downhill fast.
3. A short coat.
4. What bears do in the winter.
5. Opposite of summer.
6. Shoes for snowy days.
9. Frozen trickle of water.
11. Ice crystal.
13. December 25th.
14. Area around the North Pole.
16. Used to warm a room.
17. Winter hand warmers.
19. Temperature (in Celsius) at which water freezes.



January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2 <i>World Introvert Day</i>	3 <i>Festival of Sleep Day</i>
4 <i>National Spaghetti Day</i>	5 <i>National Bird Day</i>	6 <i>Bean Day</i>	7 <i>Old Rock Day</i>	8 <i>Bubble Bath Day</i>	9 <i>National Apricot Day</i>	10 <i>Bittersweet Chocolate Day</i>
11 <i>Learn Your Name in Morse Code Day</i>	12 <i>National Hot Tea Day</i>	13 <i>International Skeptics Day</i>	14 <i>Dress Up Your Pet Day</i>	15 <i>National Bagel Day</i>	16 <i>National Nothing Day</i>	17 <i>Ditch New Years Resolutions Day</i>
18 <i>Winnie the Pooh Day</i>	19 <i>National Popcorn Day</i>	20 <i>National Cheese Lovers Day</i>	21 <i>National Hugging Day</i>	22 <i>National Blonde Brownie Day</i>	23 <i>National Pie Day</i>	24 <i>Compliment Day</i>
25 <i>Opposite Day</i>	26 <i>Spouse's Day</i>	27 <i>Chocolate Cake Day</i>	28 <i>Fun at Work Day</i>	29 <i>National Puzzle Day</i>	30 <i>Croissant Day</i>	31 <i>National Seed Swap Day</i>

MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

- *National Bath Safety Month*
- *National Blood Donor Month*
- *Braille Literacy Month*
- *National Hobby Month*
- *Hot Tea Month*
- *National Oatmeal Month*
- *National Soup Month*



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Arctic, Blizzard, Boots, Chilly, Christmas, December, Frozen, Gust, Heater, Hibernation, Icicle, Jacket, March, Mittens, Scarf, Shiver, Sled, Snowflake, Snowman, Sweater, Thermometer, Wind, Winter, Zero

