

Getting the right amount of protein

Everyone’s protein needs are different. Use this guide to become familiar with protein sources and which protein foods are best for your kidney health.



Plant-based proteins:

- Beans and legumes (black beans, chickpeas, pinto beans, kidney beans, lentils, and split peas)
- Whole grains (oats, brown rice, whole wheat bread, and pasta)
- Nuts, seeds, and nut butter (peanut butter, almonds, walnuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, and flax seeds)
- Soy, tofu, and tempeh



Animal-based proteins:

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Beef
- Pork
- Eggs
- Dairy (yogurt, cheese, and milk)

Protein foods to limit	Protein foods to choose more often
Processed meats (deli meat, hot dogs, sausage, bacon, bologna, salami, pepperoni, and jerky)	Poultry (fresh chicken, turkey)
Red meat (beef, pork, and lamb)	Seafood (fresh fish, shellfish, and low sodium canned)
Fast foods	Beans and legumes
Pre-made chicken nuggets/strips and fish sticks	Nuts, seeds, and nut butter
Frozen meals (talk with your care team about healthy frozen meal options)	Whole grains
High-fat dairy products, large portions of dairy, processed cheeses (Velveeta, American, and Cheez whiz)	Low-fat dairy products and eggs

Top protein tips for a kidney diet

Follow these protein tips to feel your best with chronic kidney disease (CKD).



Consider plant-based proteins

Swap meat for a plant-based option. Try adding beans to your chili instead of ground meat.



Add fiber to your diet

Plant-based proteins are a great source of fiber which can help manage blood sugar and keep your gut happy.



Choose a balanced plate

Portion size matters! Aim to fill your plate with more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fat, and the recommended amount of protein.



Avoid protein supplements

Avoid supplements like protein powders, shakes, and bars unless advised by your doctor or dietitian.



We are here to help!

Your care team can help you figure out the right amount of protein for you.