



PROTEIN

Protein rich foods should make up about a quarter of your meal plate. A good guide is to think of the size of your palm and aim for that amount. Protein rich foods are: meats, dairy, eggs, fish, nuts and seeds, tofu, beans and lentils.

Protein is important in the body for healing and repair, hair and nails, muscles and tendons, as well as enzyme and hormones.

Animal products are 'complete' proteins, that mean they contain all the amino acids that we need in the diet. Vegan sources of protein have to be combined to cover all the amino acids that are needed for example brown rice and beans make up a complete protein.

4 KEY POINTS ABOUT PROTEIN

- 1) Starts in the stomach:** Protein digestion starts in the stomach although the chewing action of the mouth is also key, but don't forget that all digestion starts in the brain- when you think about food and that is when your body starts to prepare for food produces digestive enzymes!
- 2) Blood sugars:** ensuring you have enough protein in your meals (and snacks) is a really good way of stabilising your blood sugar- that means avoiding big peaks and troughs and aiming for a gentle curve of blood sugar ups and downs.
- 3) Feeling full:** if you don't feel full up and satiated after eating check if your meal has contained enough protein. Protein is really key for feeling satisfied by food. Fat and fibre are also important here but protein is key.
- 4) The numbers:** aim for 1.2-5g per day of protein per kg of body weight but remember that not all the weight of a protein rich food is actually protein! For 100g of raw weight of meat 20-25g is actually protein! For 100g of cooked beans that is 5-9g of protein, 100g of cheddar cheese has 25g protein.

TOP TIP: three easy options to add to a meal that are rich in protein are cottage cheese, eggs and peanut butter.

Written by:

In association with: