

How Much Protein Do We Need Each Day?

Why are we so protein obsessed? A nutritionist explains how much protein you really need and how to find the best sources.

by Keri Glassman, R.D. Source: TODAY

Protein. When people see this word they often think of steak, chicken, powders and bars. Protein seems to be water cooler chatter as much as it is dinner time talk. But what's with all of the hype? Why are we all so protein obsessed?

Perhaps it's because protein is a vital macronutrient that has a long list of nutritional benefits. It's critical for building and repairing tissues, for forming hormones and enzymes and it even reduces hunger hormones. Protein is a back-up fuel source and helps provide satiety (keeps you satisfied) so that you can go about your day without daydreaming about your next meal.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED IN A DAY?

About 50 grams, or about 15 percent of your calories, is enough daily protein for the average adult to meet basic needs. Eating as much as a third of your daily calories from protein (about 112 grams) is both safe and beneficial.

Focus on eating a little at every meal and snack, rather than loading up at dinner, since protein is digested more slowly than carbohydrates and helps you feel satisfied. (It's not as hard as you think — even some veggies have protein!)

