

Eating the right amount of protein



In the first few weeks after your transplant your protein needs are high. This is because your body is healing after your surgery and high doses of prednisone cause muscle to break down. In the longer term, when prednisone doses are lower, you do not need as much protein. It is advisable to eat less protein so that the new kidney has less work to do and to avoid excessive weight gain.

Where's the protein in food?

The richest sources of protein are: meat, chicken, fish, and seafood; eggs; milk, yoghurt and cheese; legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas); tofu; and nuts, with cereals, bread, fruit and vegetables providing smaller amounts. (See table below)

Food	Serving size	Protein per serving
Meat, poultry, fish	100g* beef or lamb (eg. 1 small steak) 100g* chicken (eg. ½ breast or drumstick) 120g* fish	30g
Eggs	2	15g
Legumes (beans, chickpeas, lentils)	1 cup (cooked)	10g
Tofu	120g	
Nuts/seeds	30g (2 tbsp) 1 ½ tbsp nut butter	10g
Milk	1 cup (250ml)	10g
Yoghurt	200g	
Cheese (hard varieties)	30g	
Wholegrain cereal products	1 slice bread ½ cup cereal ½ cup brown rice or wholemeal pasta	3g
Vegetables	½ cup (cooked) 1 cup (raw)	2g
Fruit	1 medium piece	2g

(* Cooked weight)

Tips

- Eat a source of protein at each meal when your requirement is high.
- Meat and dairy foods can be high in saturated fat which may increase your blood cholesterol level. It is best to choose lower fat options:
 - o Reduced fat or low fat milk, yoghurt and cheese
 - o Lean red meat
 - o Chicken without skin
- Fish (fresh or canned) is a good source of protein and the healthy omega-3 fats – Include fish 2 to 3 times per week
- Legumes are useful to include in your diet as they are high in protein and fibre.
- Nuts are a good source of protein and are a highly nutritious food, however they are high in fat and kilojoules so limit to 30g per day.

How to make sure you eat enough protein each day

In the first few weeks

You should aim to eat

..... grams protein per day.

Meat, poultry, fish	
Eggs	
Legumes, tofu	
Nuts/seeds/ nut butters	
Milk, yoghurt, cheese	
Wholegrain food/cereal	
Vegetables	
Fruit	

In the longer term

You should aim to eat

..... grams protein per day.

Meat, poultry, fish	
Eggs	
Legumes, tofu	
Nuts/seeds	
Milk, yoghurt, cheese	
Wholegrain food/cereal	
Vegetables	
Fruit	

This fact sheet is based on the *Evidence-based Guidelines for the Nutritional Management of Adult Kidney Transplant Recipients*, developed with funding from the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (formerly GMCT). The information has been independently reviewed by the Dietitians Association of Australia. For expert nutrition and dietary advice contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian. Visit 'Find an Accredited Practising Dietitian' at www.daa.asn.au or call 1800 812 942.