

Protein for Young Children



When it can be a struggle to just get your little one to eat, sometimes serving a nutritious meal isn't the highest priority. Adding protein throughout the day, including snacks, is a great way to make sure your kids eat enough while enjoying a nutritious diet.



WHY IS PROTEIN IMPORTANT?

- Protein is the only nutrient that supplies body cells with what they need to **grow, build muscle and stay healthy**.
- Foods high in protein also **provide** other essential **vitamins** and **minerals** that can support strong **bones**, a healthy **immune system**, and help gain **energy** from food.
- By eating **protein-rich** foods throughout the day, your kids will feel **fuller** between meals. This could result in **less snacking**.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- **Encourage** kids to eat protein-rich foods by letting them know that these foods help them to **grow** big and strong, just like their favorite action figure.
- **Stock** the pantry and refrigerator with protein-rich foods that are an easy grab and go option.
- Give kids choices between several protein-rich snacks. Giving kids a **choice** will make them more likely to eat the snack and teaches them to enjoy healthful foods.



GRAB AND GO SNACK IDEAS

FOR THE REFRIGERATOR	FOR THE PANTRY
1 hard-boiled egg	2 tablespoons nut butter (peanut, almond)
3 slices of lean deli meat (turkey, ham, roast beef)	½ cup homemade trail mix (almonds, peanuts, dried fruit, chocolate chips)
6 ounces low-fat Greek yogurt	3 ounces canned tuna/chicken/salmon
1 cup low-fat milk	¼ cup assorted nuts (pistachios, cashews, peanuts, almonds)
1 ounce string cheese	1 cup high-protein cereal
3 ounces cottage cheese	2 tablespoons bean dip/hummus



HOW MUCH PROTEIN DOES MY CHILD NEED?*

Age	Recommended Amount of Protein Per Day
1-3 years	13 grams
4-8 years	19 grams
9-13 years	34 grams

* Protein ranges based on the average weight of children in the respective age group.



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