Why Are Protein Foods Important?
Protein foods are an important source of nutrients that are vital for good health. These foods not only provide proteins, which are the building blocks of bones, muscle, cartilage, skin, blood, hormones, and vitamins, but they also supply the body with B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium. B vitamins and magnesium help the body release energy, iron carries oxygen in the blood, and zinc helps the immune system function properly.

How Many Ounces Should You Eat Daily?
Depending on age, men should eat 5.5 to 6.5 ounces of protein per day, and women should eat 5 to 5.5 ounces daily.

What Counts as an Ounce of Protein?
The following are examples of what counts as a one ounce equivalent of protein:
- 1 ounce cooked chicken, beef, or pork
- 1 egg
- ½ ounce of nuts or 1 tablespoon nut butter
- ¼ cup cooked beans
- ¼ cup tofu

Adding Healthy Protein to Your Diet
Try these tips to help you choose lean and/or varied proteins:
- Choose lean cuts of meat, like skinless chicken breasts, sirloin or round steaks, pork loin or tenderloin.
- Trim any skin or visible fat from meat before cooking it.
- Eat seafood—such as salmon or trout—twice a week.
- Vegetarian? Try tofu, hummus, veggie burgers, and beans.
- Eat unsalted nuts as a snack, but watch your portions—the calories in nuts can add up quickly!

Remember
Protein foods help boost your energy and immune system.

Next Steps
1. Read “How Much Food from the Protein Group Is Needed Daily?”
2. Read “Why Is It Important to Make Lean or Low-Fat Choices from the Protein Foods Group?”
3. Track this week’s protein intake online in the Health Trackers section of the Wellness website (Optional)