



## DOES EATING EXTRA PROTEIN MAKE YOU STRONGER?

The amount of protein in a typical diet is usually enough to build cells and tissue. A common misconception is that eating extra protein is thought to make you stronger, but exercise strengthens muscles, not protein. Protein intake does not directly increase the size or strength of your muscles, it helps to repair the broken down tissue after exercise.

## PROTEIN

**Protein is 1 of the 3 macronutrients, along with carbohydrate and fat.** Protein is made up of smaller molecules called amino acids. It is found in animal and plant products. Animal protein is a complete protein which means it contains all of the essential amino acids (our body cannot make essential amino acids and we must get them through food). Plant protein is an incomplete protein and does not contain all of the essential amino acids. If following a mostly plant-based diet, be sure to eat a variety of different types of plant protein to ensure you are getting all of the amino acids your body needs.

### ROLES OF PROTEIN IN THE BODY

- **BUILDS:** builds cells, tissues and muscles
- **REPAIRS:** helps to heal cuts or wounds
- **PROTECTS:** helps produce antibodies to strengthen the immune system

**Protein foods include foods made from seafood, meat, poultry, dairy and eggs; beans, peas, lentils, grains, nuts, seeds and soy products.**



- **Choose lean or low fat meat and poultry:** 93% lean ground beef, pork loin, and skinless chicken breasts.
- **Choose seafood options that are higher in omega-3s:** salmon, anchovies, and trout.

You don't need to eat a complete protein at each meal, so vary your protein routine by including animal and plant products in your diet!

### How Much Protein Do You Need?

Protein needs vary depending on your age, sex, health, and level of physical activity. For general protein recommendations, visit [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov). If you have certain medical conditions, your needs may vary. Always check with a doctor or dietitian to find your individualized needs.