

Protein: How Much Do You Need?

Are You Getting the Right Amount of Protein?



High Protein Foods

What is protein? How much protein do we need? Is it possible to eat too much protein? These are important questions for people following a low carb way of eating, who usually are replacing part of their carbohydrate intake with protein.

What is protein?

Protein is one of the basic building blocks of the human body, being about 16 percent of our total body weight. Muscle, hair, skin, and connective tissue are mainly made up of protein. However, protein plays a major role in **all** of the cells and most of the fluids in our bodies. In addition, many of our bodies' important chemicals -- enzymes, hormones, neurotransmitters, and even our DNA -- are at least partially made up of protein. Although our bodies are good at "recycling" protein, we use up protein constantly, so it is important to continually replace it.

Proteins are made up of smaller units called amino acids. Our bodies cannot manufacture nine amino acids, so it is important to include all these amino acids in our diets. Animal proteins such as meat, eggs, and dairy products have all the amino acids, and many plants have some of them. Learn more about amino acids in our diet.

How much protein do we need?

Our protein needs depend on our age, size, and activity level. Next week you will learn your own personal numbers. Please use the following until next week. An average woman under 225 lbs should have 75-100 grams of protein per day. An average man under 325 should have 125-150 grams of protein per day.

What happens if we don't eat enough protein?

Unlike fat and glucose, our body has little capacity to store protein. If we were to stop eating protein, our body would start to break down muscle for its needs within a day or so.

Is it OK to eat a lot more protein than the minimum recommendations?

This is the crucial question for people on diets which are higher in protein than usual, as low carb diets tend to be. In a review of the research, the National Academy of Sciences reported that the only known danger from high animal protein diets is for individuals with kidney disease. They point out that increased protein could be helpful in treating obesity. There is also accumulating evidence that extra soy protein may help prevent osteoporosis.

Extra protein can be broken down into glucose in a process called *gluconeogenesis*. On low carb diets, this happens continually. One benefit of obtaining glucose from protein is that it is absorbed into the bloodstream very slowly, so it doesn't cause a rapid blood sugar increase.

What foods have the most protein?

Meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes, and nuts all have substantial amounts of protein. Helpful information:

Shortcut: An ounce of meat or fish has approximately 7 grams of protein.

Beef

- Hamburger patty, 4 oz – 28 grams protein
- Steak, 6 oz – 42 grams
- Most cuts of beef – 7 grams of protein per ounce

Chicken

- Chicken breast, 3.5 oz - 30 grams protein
- Chicken thigh – 10 grams (for average size)
- Drumstick – 11 grams
- Wing – 6 grams
- Chicken meat, cooked, 4 oz – 35 grams

Fish

- Most fish fillets or steaks are about 22 grams of protein for 3 ½ oz (100 grams) of cooked fish, or 6 grams per ounce
- Tuna, 6 oz can - 40 grams of protein

Pork

- Pork chop, average - 22 grams protein
- Pork loin or tenderloin, 4 oz – 29 grams
- Ground pork, 1 oz raw – 5 grams; 3 oz cooked – 22 grams

Eggs and Dairy

- Egg, large - 6 grams protein
- Milk, 1 cup - 8 grams
- Cottage cheese, ½ cup - 15 grams
- Yogurt, 1 cup – usually 8-12 grams, check label
- Soft cheeses (Mozzarella, Brie, Camembert) – 6 grams per oz
- Medium cheeses (Swiss) – 7 or 8 grams per oz
- Hard cheeses (Parmesan) – 10 grams per oz
- Soy Milk – 9 grams in 8oz
- Herbalife Shake – 15 grams of protein

Beans (including soy)

- Tofu, ½ cup 20 grams protein
- Tofu, 1 oz, 2.3 grams
- Most beans (black, pinto, lentils, etc) about 7-10 grams protein per half cup of cooked beans
- Soy beans, ½ cup cooked – 14 grams protein
- Split peas, ½ cup cooked – 8 grams

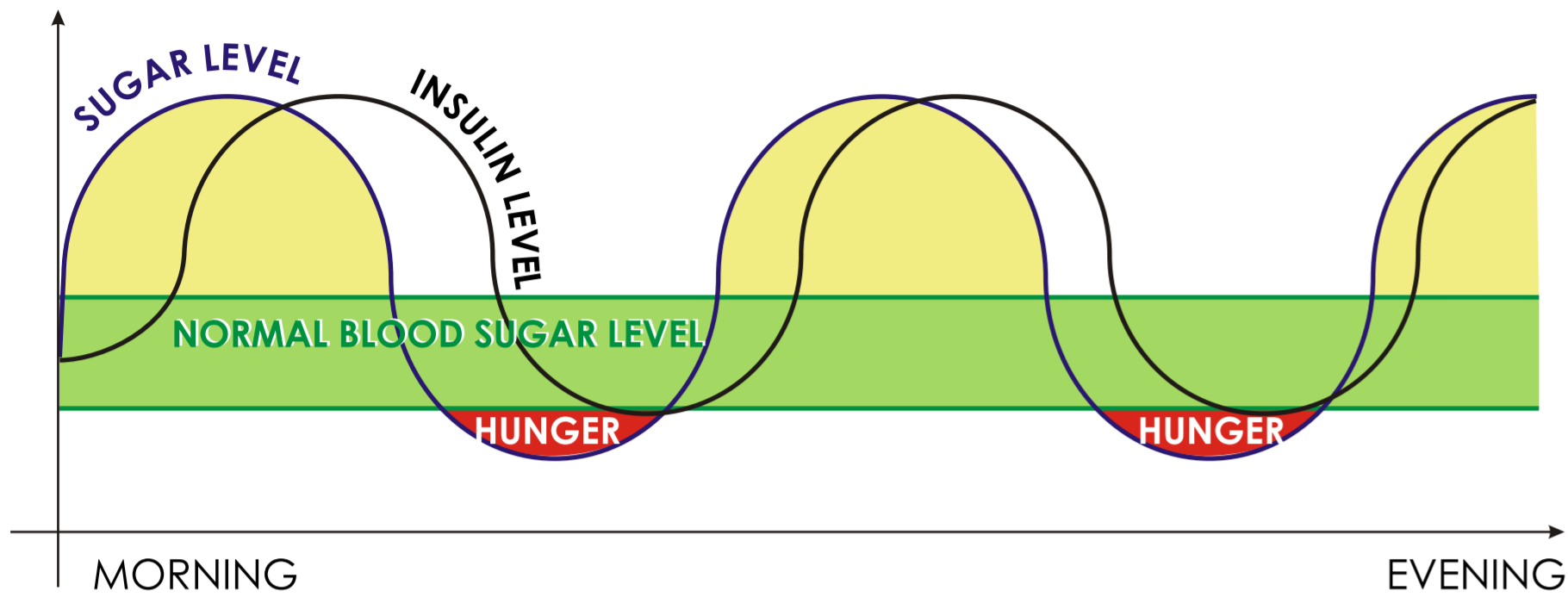
Nuts and Seeds

- Peanut butter, 2 Tablespoons - 8 grams protein
- Almonds, ¼ cup – 8 grams
- Sunflower seeds, ¼ cup – 6 grams
- Pumpkin seeds, ¼ cup – 19 grams
- Flax seeds – ¼ cup – 8 gram

Ask your coach about the great Herbalife Protein Snacks!

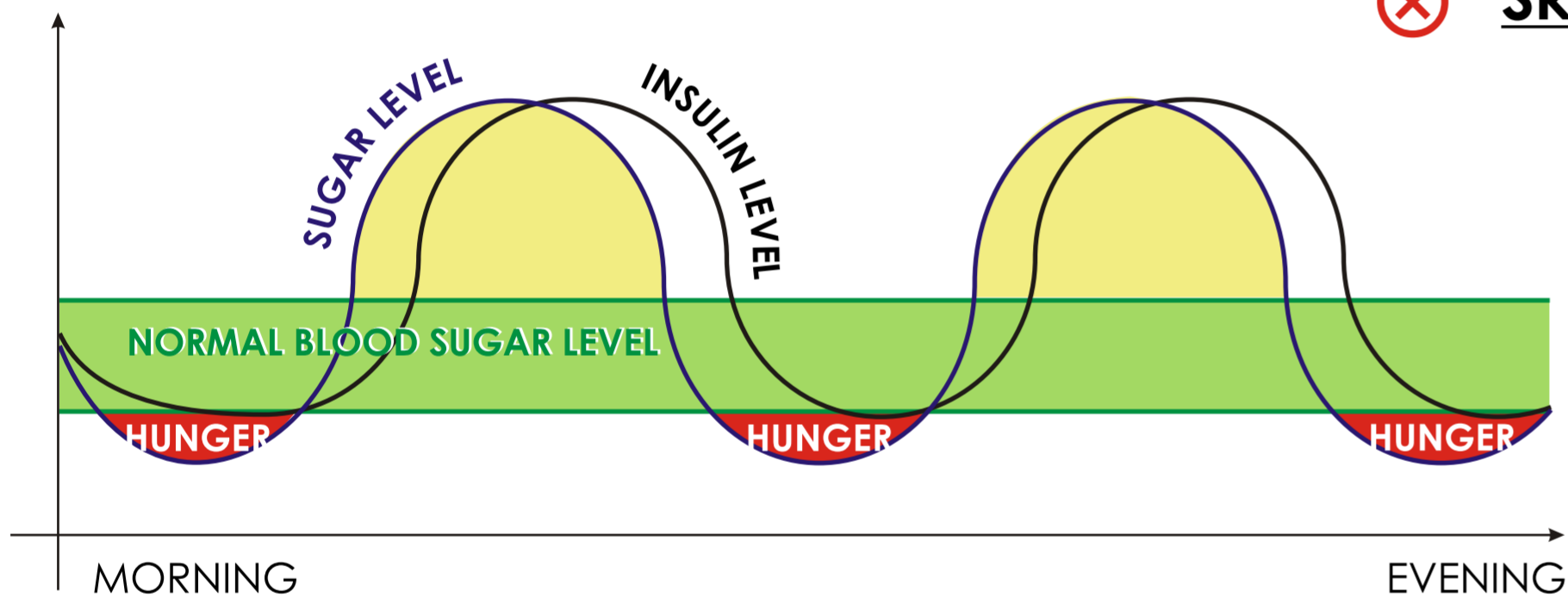
HEALTHY BREAKFAST: FEEL GOOD AND CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT

⊗ Carbs-based breakfast



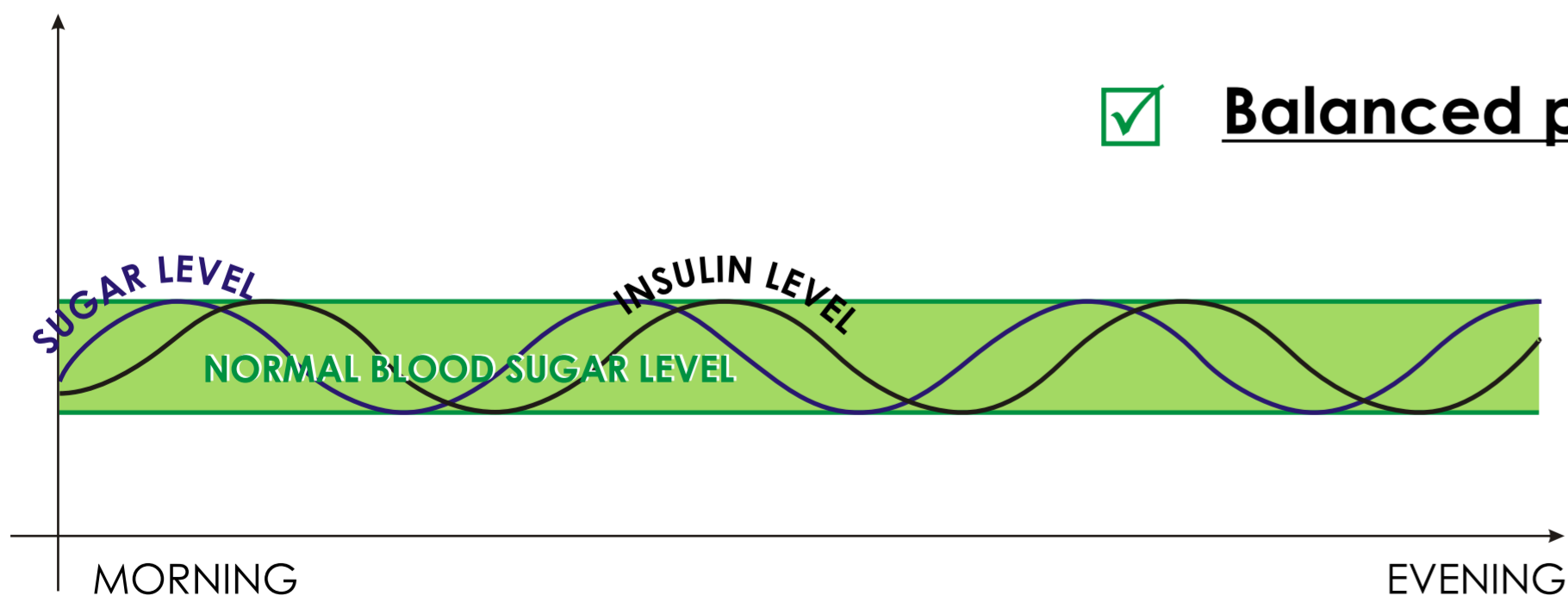
In the morning simple carbohydrates (*sugary refined cereals, white breads, toasts, etc*) cause an immediate surge of blood sugar level which results in a substantial emission of insulin. The insulin removes sugar from blood turning its excess into fat. The result is a decreased level of blood sugar, and thirst for more carbs. This cycle repeats itself 2-3 more times during the day. This vicious circle constitutes one of the major reasons for diabetes, high blood pressure and extra weight.

⊗ Skipping breakfast



When you skip breakfast, blood sugar drops below the normal level, you experience cravings and a drop of energy. You again revert to simple carbohydrates to achieve a quick surge of blood sugar and to overcome hunger and a drop of energy. Simple carbohydrates will cause an immediate surge of blood sugar level and a substantial insulin emission. The insulin removes sugar from blood turning its excess into fat. Then this cycle repeats itself 2-3 more times during the day. This vicious circle constitutes one of the major reasons for diabetes, high blood pressure and extra weight.

☑ Balanced protein-based breakfast



Such a breakfast supplies our body with all vital nutrients and energy without increasing blood sugar and insulin levels. It helps to avoid dependence on carbs during the day. In this way, appetite stays under control, cravings for carbs (*snacks, chocolate, pastry, junk, soft drinks, etc*) diminish and the body uses its own stored fats to get more energy.

H2... Oh!

Water and Weight Loss

We have all heard about the importance of drinking those eight glasses of water a day, but did you ever stop to think how drinking enough water might help your weight loss efforts?

Water Works!

Here is what one successful weight loss member says about drinking enough water and being at the top of her list of weight loss tactics:

"To me, the most beneficial weight loss strategy is drinking plenty of water. At least two liters a day makes a huge difference, and it's really not as hard as it seems after you do for a few days. Not only does it help shed pounds, but it improves your complexion, too!"

Another successful loser knows all about the wonders of water. She has found that water is a worthy adversary against cravings. When a visitor recently asked if drinking enough water is really all that important to weight loss, she had a lot to say:

"I have to personally vouch that it works. Not only is it completely healthy for you and something you should be doing already, it's also a natural appetite suppressant. In fact, many times when you feel hungry for a snack, you are really just thirsty. It's really easy to train your body to crave water instead of a candy bar; if I am tempted, I immediately grab my water and take a large gulp. I bring water to work in a large sport container so I can drink it there too. People call me the 'Water Girl!'"

Did You Know You May Be Dehydrated?

One of our modern comforts actually contributes to dehydration. Air conditioning and heating systems in offices, homes, even cars decrease the humidity in the air. On average, we lose about 10 cups of water a day. That's pretty scary when you realize that our bodies are predominantly made up of water!

The weather plays a big part in dehydration, too -- especially in these dog days of summer. It is extremely important to drink enough water when you are going to be playing, working or exercising outside in the heat. If you begin to feel weak or dizzy, then it's time to cool down. Nausea may indicate that you are beginning to experience heat illness. If your symptoms do not improve, or, they worsen, do not hesitate to seek medical attention. Heat stroke claims many lives every year, especially in unusually hot summers like the heat wave much of the U.S. is experiencing at the moment.

Being thirsty is not the only symptom of dehydration. In fact, once you actually feel physical thirst, you may be well on your way to dehydration. Other signs of dehydration are dark or foul-smelling urine. Even mild dehydration is not only perilous to renal (kidney) function, but it can also have other physical and psychological ramifications like severe headaches or decreased concentration levels.

Did You Know if You Drink Soda, You Should Drink More Water?

A friend on the program related to me that her coach told her group that each time she drank a diet soda that she should in turn drink two extra glasses of water (in addition to recommended daily amount). That's because drinking sodas and other beverages that contain caffeine actually contributes to dehydration. These types of beverages act as diuretics and cause us to empty our bladders more often.

Water Yourself

The good news is, water is available in lots of forms; you don't have to get bored with the water cooler at the office or by visiting the water fountain numerous times a day. Instead, keep a nice cold bottle on hand at all times. In the meantime, you can increase the amount of water you're taking in by eating foods that contain a high water content like fruits and vegetables.

You also should keep in mind the heat and humidity factors as well as your exercise and work habits. If you are exercising, you need to drink more water than the average person before, during and after your workout. If you are doing strenuous labor, or outdoors work in the heat, you will definitely want to go over the minimum as well. How much is enough? Six cups is okay; eight cups is great and 10 cups is super.

"But I Don't Like Water!"

Try adding lime slices, lemon juice, even peppermint to your water to add a little zing to it. You may find in time you simply develop a taste for plain water. Think back to when you were a kid. Were there a few vegetables you simply couldn't tolerate? Did you ever get caught hiding them in your napkin or trying to get the dog to eat it? Do you eat any of those vegetables now? Do you actually enjoy them? Over time you developed a taste for the offending veggie. Although most of us have grown very used to drinking our sodas, coffee or tea and the thought of drinking plain water makes us cringe, in time, you will find that you not only enjoy drinking water, you will crave it.

Another trick is to buy seltzer or carbonated mineral water in the beginning and add your citrus or mint flavorings to give the impression of soda. You could try the diet flavored waters like Clearly Canadian. After you have adjusted from having soda as a mainstay, you may gradually begin seeing that what you really want is the plain water and you can in turn give up the "zing" and the "fizz" of soda altogether.

Are You Hungry or Thirsty?

Many successful "losers" swear by using an ice-cold glass of water to curb their food cravings. If you don't believe it works, why not give it a try? When you feel the urge to splurge coming on, try downing an entire glass of water and see if your craving is still around afterwards. Try not to gulp all of it down at once, though. Sip it slowly and give your brain time to register the fact that you have just been hydrated.

If your craving has dissipated after you finish off that glass of water, then that just goes to show you weren't experiencing "true hunger." If you do feel actual hunger pangs at that point, by all means, eat. However sometimes when we think we feel hungry, we are actually thirsty. Our bodies are dehydrated and we get our "wires crossed" and start a feeding frenzy instead of giving our bodies what they really need -- hydration.

Fill 'Er Up

Second, another way drinking water may help you lose weight is by making you feel fuller. The trick here is to be consistent. Drinking one extra glass of water isn't going to help you feel satiated throughout the day. You've got to keep water on hand and cold, or else you probably won't keep the habit up. If you have access to a refrigerator at work, perfect. Put a gallon carton in the fridge in the morning and help yourself throughout the day. If you work at a place that has a water cooler, that's even better.

If you don't have a refrigerator or watering hole, why not carry one of the small picnic coolers and stock it with small bottles of water? Keep it next to your chair or under your desk. Other tricks include buying a sports bottle or one of those insulated mugs with a lid on it. Fill it up in the morning and refill it from the kitchen, break room or bathroom sink throughout the day.

A Final Word

So you want one more reason to drink water? Last but not least, some weight loss experts say that drinking ice cold water may even speed up your metabolism!

Drinking water is like any other healthy behavior: you have to make a habit of it in order to stick with it. If you can, then your general health as well as your weight loss efforts will benefit from the power of H₂O!