

Transcript

One of the most important nutrients you need is protein. Protein helps your body in many ways. It is a building block for the body, helping your skin, bones, organs, muscles and blood. It also provides energy to your body.

Protein is found in a variety of foods like meat, poultry, fish, dried beans, nuts, and eggs.

As with most foods, some protein foods are better choices than others. You want to pick the healthiest protein you can. So, when selecting meat at the market, look for the leanest cuts available. These have the highest levels of protein and the least fat. And if picking chicken or turkey, look for skinless versions or remove the skin before you eat them. The skin has extra calories and fat.

If packages of meat have a food label on them, look for two numbers. If you see one that is 80/20, that means that it is 80 percent lean meat and 20 percent fat. A 90/10 package would have a lower amount of fat in it. Look at the label and pick the healthier one.

Many of us have heard that ground chicken or turkey is always a better choice than ground beef. This is not always true. Check the label carefully and choose the meat that has the lower amount of fat.

Limit your servings of bacon, cured ham and processed meats. They tend to be high in sodium and fat which can raise your risk of heart disease and cancer.

And remember, there are a variety of protein foods that come from plants and trees. Adding nuts, seeds, beans, and tofu to your meals is a wonderful way to include nutrient packed protein. Nuts are high in calories, so watch your portions size and choose unsalted products.

Talk with a registered dietitian or your healthcare provider about how much protein you should aim for per day; then choose low fat, whole foods.