

# Muscle Matters for Your Health at Any Age

## Healthy Muscles Support Healthy Bones

Strong and healthy muscles and bones support you every day, and you can support them by eating nutrient-rich foods and getting regular exercise.\* Small steps could help you reap benefits you may not realize you can gain. No matter what age you are, it's important to establish good nutrition, lifestyle and physical activity habits to help pave a path for strong muscles and bones.

Consuming high-quality protein and participating in resistance exercise, such as weight lifting, are important to muscle strength. Maintaining your muscle contributes to health and well-being.

**Whether your goal is maintaining a toned and healthy body or aging healthfully, protein can benefit your active lifestyle:**

- **Build more lean muscle** – a **higher protein diet** in combination with resistance exercise can help build healthy muscles and support weight management.
- **Reduce muscle loss during aging** – protein can help preserve muscle as you age.
- **Enhance muscle recovery after resistance exercise** – consuming high-quality protein may help nourish your muscles after a tough workout and help you make the most out of your workout.

### FAQ:

#### What is protein?

Protein is an essential nutrient (like fat and carbohydrate) your body needs each day. Not all proteins are equal – quality can make a difference. High-quality protein foods make it easy for you to get all of the essential amino acids your body needs to build and maintain muscles and help your body work properly.



#### What are high-quality proteins?

Dairy foods such as milk, flavored milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt and Greek-style yogurt are good

sources of high-quality protein.\*\* High-quality protein provides all the essential amino acids your body can't make on its own. The high-quality protein found in foods such as dairy foods, eggs, lean beef and pork, skinless poultry, fish and soy offers convenient options to help you meet your protein needs.

– For more information, see **Protein: Understanding the Basics**.

#### How can I get the benefits of protein?

- Incorporate dairy protein into daily meals, snacks and after your workouts.
- Look for protein on the nutrition facts label and ingredients list of your favorite foods.†
- Enjoy foods and beverages containing whey protein, such as your favorite protein bar or shake, which can be found at grocery and health food stores.

#### Did You Know?

- Dietary protein is an essential nutrient for bone health.
- There's more than just calcium needed to make strong bones – protein plays a role, too, and dairy foods provide both of these key nutrients.††
- Healthy bones matter at all ages, and strong muscles help support strong bones. Muscle strengthening exercises are physical activities that build the muscles. This includes lifting weights, using elastic exercise bands or lifting your own body weight.
- Regular exercise is important at all ages to help build strength, improve posture, promote balance to prevent falls and increase muscle mass.

Get recipes that include protein at [wheyprotein.nationaldairycouncil.org](http://wheyprotein.nationaldairycouncil.org) and [nationaldairycouncil.org](http://nationaldairycouncil.org).





## The role of protein in healthy aging

Want to keep doing the things you like to do, whether it's hiking with your grandkids or dancing with your friends? Healthy habits, including resistance exercise and a **diet higher in protein**, can help you maintain your muscles to help stay active as you age.

- Experts recommend 2 hours and 30 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activities like brisk walking, ballroom dancing or general gardening for adults, including older adults.

**Diets higher in protein**, including dairy foods that contain high-quality protein, can help minimize muscle loss as you age. Here is how dairy can help you:

- Milk and cheese are good sources of high-quality protein. A diet higher in protein can help you maintain muscle as you age.†
- Yogurt is a good source of high-quality protein. Did you know that most Greek-style yogurts have about double the amount of protein as traditional yogurts?
- Whey protein, a high-quality protein from milk, can help provide the protein you need in your diet.



A healthy diet includes adequate protein.

**Low-fat and fat-free dairy foods provide high-quality protein.** Milk, flavored milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, Greek-style yogurt as well as foods and beverages containing whey protein can help you get the protein you need.

Regardless of the type or variety of milk, cheese or yogurt you choose (e.g., regular, low-fat, fat-free, reduced-sodium, lactose-free, etc.), protein will be present. In addition to protein, dairy foods (milk, cheese and yogurt) are important sources of calcium, potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, vitamins A, D and B<sub>12</sub> and riboflavin in the U.S. diet.

➤ From learning how to pick the best **options for meatless meals** to **managing weight and controlling hunger** to learning how to **maintain and build healthy muscles and bones** – diets higher in protein can help people meet health and wellness goals.

\*Check with your doctor or registered dietitian before making changes to your diet and/or exercise regimen.

\*\*Look for products containing 5 grams or more of protein per serving.

†Look for products containing 5 grams or more of protein per serving and 10% or more of the Daily Value (DV).

‡Look for products containing 5 grams or more of protein and 100 mg or more of calcium per serving.

§Look for cheeses providing 5 grams or more protein per ounce.