Live Well, Work Well

March 2025

The Power of Protein

Protein is having a moment, and it's for good reason. While some focus on it for muscle-building, others view it from a weight-loss perspective. Regardless of personal goals, protein is a macronutrient essential for body function. It is made up of many building blocks called amino acids and is fundamental for good health.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–25 recommend that adults consume 10%-35% of their total calories from protein. Depending on their activity level, age and weight, some people might need more.

Some people like to calculate their protein needs in grams instead of percentages. For example, if their daily needs are 2,000 calories, protein would make up 200-700 calories, which is 50-175 grams.

Healthy protein sources include eggs, fish, lean meats and low-fat dairy. Good plant sources include nuts, seeds, beans and lentils. Health experts recommend spreading out your protein consumption throughout the day. Eating more protein at breakfast could also help decrease hunger and cravings later in the day. Keep in mind that protein shouldn't make up your entire meal; it should accompany fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Most people get enough protein from whole foods, but protein supplements are popular alternatives, especially for vegans and lactose-intolerant individuals.

Benefits of Protein

Protein is a vital part of one's diet. As such, there are several benefits of protein, including the following:

- Builds muscle mass and strength
- Strengthens bones
- Aids in injury recovery
- Reduces hunger by keeping you full for long periods
- Forms essential enzymes, hormones and vitamins

Recognizing the multifaceted importance of protein underscores the need to incorporate protein sources into your diet to maintain optimal health.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your diet or how to develop a balanced eating plan.

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A Daily 5-minute Walk Could Make a Difference

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by fitness trends or goals. While research shows that 11 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise daily may lower your risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease or premature death, another health expert is praising the accessible exercise form of walking.

The National Jewish Health's director of cardiovascular prevention and wellness expressed that even a short amount of walking—just five minutes—has health benefits and supports future exercise goals. Walks improve the body's blood flow and boost creativity and productivity. Like any other exercise, walking also helps strengthen muscles and delivers oxygen to the brain and muscles.

How to Walk More Each Day

Fortunately, walking can easily be implemented into a routine. Consider the following tips for including more walking into your daily routine:

- **Make small goals.** For example, you could take a five-minute walk at lunch each day. Doing so makes you more likely to succeed in maintaining a new walking habit.
- **Walk with friends.** This encourages you to keep the habit because you know others are counting on you, and it also keeps the walks from becoming monotonous.
- **Set reminders.** Decide when to walk during the day and set reminders. It's easy to forget to take a break when you get into your work.
- **Diversify your routine.** Change your walking routes to prevent boredom, or try walking at different speeds throughout your walk.
- **Listen to your body.** Don't be afraid to take time off or modify your routine. Pay attention to your body's signals and take care of yourself so you can maintain your new routine.

The key is to make movement a regular part of your day, even if it's a five-minute walk. Talk to your doctor and discuss what works best for you to learn more about creating an active routine.

Preparing for Tax-filing Season

Tax season is here, so if you haven't done so already, it's time to gather all the appropriate information you need to file your 2024 tax returns.

The federal tax return deadline is Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

However, due to federal disaster relief, millions of Americans have extensions this year. Taxpayers in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, and parts of Alaska, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia have until May 1 to file their returns and pay taxes. The IRS also extended the deadline to Oct. 15 for victims of California wildfires.

Many people elect to file their tax returns electronically. This can be done in various ways, such as using tax preparation software or consulting a tax professional. If you are filing with a paper form, there are certain documents you must include. The documentation needed may vary based on your employment status over the past year. If you have questions about your tax-filing situation, consult with a tax professional.

Recipe of the Month

Grilled Chicken and Avocado Quinoa Pilaf

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ cup fresh basil
- ¾ tsp. black pepper (divided)
- 1 avocado (cut into chunks)
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil (divided)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 small boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 large red bell pepper
- ½ medium onion (chopped)
- 1 clove garlic (minced)
- 3 cups water
- 3 tsp. sodium-free chicken bouillon
- 1 ½ cups red quinoa (uncooked and dry)

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	460
Total fat	16 g
Protein	28 g
Sodium	240 mg
Carbohydrate	54 g
Dietary fiber	7 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	3 g

Source: MyPlate

Preparations

1. Heat the grill.
2. Peel and cut the avocado into chunks; place them in a medium bowl.
3. Mix the lemon juice, basil and ½ tsp. black pepper. Drizzle over the avocado chunks, toss and set aside.
4. Cut the chicken breasts in half crosswise.
5. Mix ½ Tbsp. olive oil, salt and the remaining black pepper. Brush the mixture on the chicken and red bell pepper.
6. Grill the chicken and pepper until done. Set the chicken breasts aside. Cut the pepper into thin strips.
7. While the chicken and peppers are grilling, heat the remaining olive oil in a large pan. Add the garlic and onion, and cook until tender, about 5 minutes.
8. Add the water, bouillon and quinoa to the pan; bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat and simmer until liquid is absorbed and quinoa is cooked (about 15 to 20 minutes).
9. Place the quinoa pilaf in a large bowl and add the chicken, red peppers and avocado. Toss gently.