

Protein Intake Pre/Post Spinal Surgery



What is protein and why is it so important to consume?

- Protein is an important macronutrient used by the body as a building block, repair and maintain tissues.
- Protein is part of every cell, tissue, and organ in our bodies.
- It is important to consume enough protein before surgery to ensure that our tissues are optimal before opening them up! After surgery it will help heal back all of the tissues in our body (including organs, muscle, and skin).

How much protein should you consume pre/post-surgery?

- It is common to consume about 60 grams of protein per day (including prior to surgery).
- After surgery we need much more for healing purposes and it will depend on current body weight and height but may include over 100 grams of protein daily.



High Protein Foods

Food	Amount	Protein (grams)
Ground sirloin	3 oz	24
Tofu, firm	½ cup	20
Tuna fish packed in water	3 oz	20
Pork tenderloin	3 oz	18.4
Chicken breast, boneless/skinless	3 oz	13.4
Cottage cheese, low-fat	½ cup	13.4
Soy milk	1 cup (8 oz)	11
Soybeans	½ cup	11
Vegetable or soy patty	1 patty	11
Pumpkin seeds	1 oz	8.5
Milk (fat-free, low-fat, whole)	1 cup (8 oz)	8
Peanut butter, smooth or creamy	2 tablespoons	8
Yogurt	6 oz	8
Egg substitute	¼ cup	7.5
Cheese	1 slice (1 oz)	7
Kidney beans, canned	½ cup	7
Nuts: peanuts, pistachios, almonds	1 oz	6
Fish (haddock, flounder, perch, Pollock)	1 oz	6.5
Egg, whole or hard boiled	1 egg	6
Sunflower seeds	1 oz	5.5

Created by Marissa Field, RD, LDN
215-829-5725

Diabetes Education Center

Sources: Nutrition Care Manual + Google Images

Other Tips:

- Remember to stay hydrated and consume enough fiber in order to decrease constipation.
- If your appetite declines after surgery, consider buying a nutrition supplement or making a smoothie (with Whey Protein) in order to receive full nutrients and protein each day (if you have diabetes, use measuring cups when making your own smoothie or consider buying Glucerna or Boost High Protein).
- Consider making your everyday foods more nutrient dense by adding protein to your meals or sides.
 - Chicken, Tuna, Eggs onto a salad
 - Adding cheese, cream cheese, Whey Protein, Milk Powder and beans into things such as mashed potatoes, rice, stews, soups, chili
 - Eat nuts for snacks or peanut butter with fruit or crackers.



Still have any questions/concerns?

Please feel free to contact Marissa Field, RD, LDN at the Diabetes Education Center, Pennsylvania Hospital.

Created by Marissa Field, RD, LDN
215-829-5725

Diabetes Education Center

Sources: Nutrition Care Manual + Google Images