

PROTEINS



by the Harvard School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition

Pay attention to the protein package. Fish, poultry, and beans are your best bets.

Animal protein and vegetable protein probably have the same effects on health. It's the protein package that's likely to make a difference. A 6-ounce broiled porterhouse steak is a great source of protein—38 grams worth. But it also delivers 44 grams of fat, 16 of them saturated. That's almost three-fourths of the recommended daily intake for saturated fat. The same amount of salmon gives you 34 grams of protein and 18 grams of fat, 4 of them saturated. A cup of cooked lentils has 18 grams of protein, but under 1 gram of fat.

So when choosing protein-rich foods, pay attention to what comes along with the protein. Vegetable sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, and whole grains, are excellent choices, and they offer healthy fiber, vitamins and minerals. The best animal protein choices are fish and poultry. If you are partial to red meat, stick with the leanest cuts, choose moderate portion sizes, and make it only an occasional part of your diet.

To learn more about PROTEIN and The Healthy Eating Pyramid, explore "The Nutrition Source" online at: www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/protein-full-story/index.html

SEE REVERSE FOR 5 QUICK TIPS

5 QUICK TIPS

CHOOSING HEALTHY PROTEIN FOODS



► **Mix it up.**

Most reasonable diets provide enough protein for healthy people. Eating a variety of foods will ensure that you get all of the amino acids you need.

► **Go low on saturated fat.**

Beans, fish and poultry provide plenty of protein, without much saturated fat. Steer clear of fatty meats and use whole-milk dairy products sparingly. For more information on saturated fat, read "Fats and Cholesterol: Out with the Bad, In with the Good."

► **Limit red meat—and avoid processed meat.**

Research suggests that people who eat more than 18 ounces a week of red meat have a higher risk of colon cancer. So make red meat—beef, pork, lamb—only an occasional part of your diet, if you eat it at all. And skip the processed stuff—bacon, hot dogs, and deli meats—since that's also been linked to higher cancer risk.

► **Eat soy in moderation.**

Tofu and other soy foods are an excellent red meat alternative. But don't go overboard; 2 to 4 servings a week is a good target. And stay away from supplements that contain concentrated soy protein or extracts, such as isoflavones, as we just don't know the long term effects.

► **Balance carbs and protein.**

Cutting back on highly processed carbohydrates and increasing protein improves levels of blood triglycerides and HDL, and so may reduce your chances of having a heart attack, stroke, or other form of cardiovascular disease. It may also make you feel full longer, and stave off hunger pangs.