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FRESH & HEALTHY

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS

Protein Powers Family Meals: Vegetarian Style

Protein is essential for many reasons. Besides helping to build muscle, protein makes enzymes and produces antibodies against infection. Protein also is a building block for blood, skin, bones and your DNA.

Protein is one of three macronutrients our bodies use for energy (carbohydrates and fats are the other two.) Each macronutrient plays an equally vital role in our daily diets. Protein is important for growth (growing kids), maintenance (keeping it together as adults) and body repair (from cuts to broken bones).

Most Americans actually get enough daily protein, yet the U.S. Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate recommend that kids and adults eat protein from a wider variety of sources and make leaner selections.

Most Common Protein-Rich Foods:

Animal-based protein:

- Beef, pork, chicken, turkey, seafood, milk, cheese, yogurt and eggs

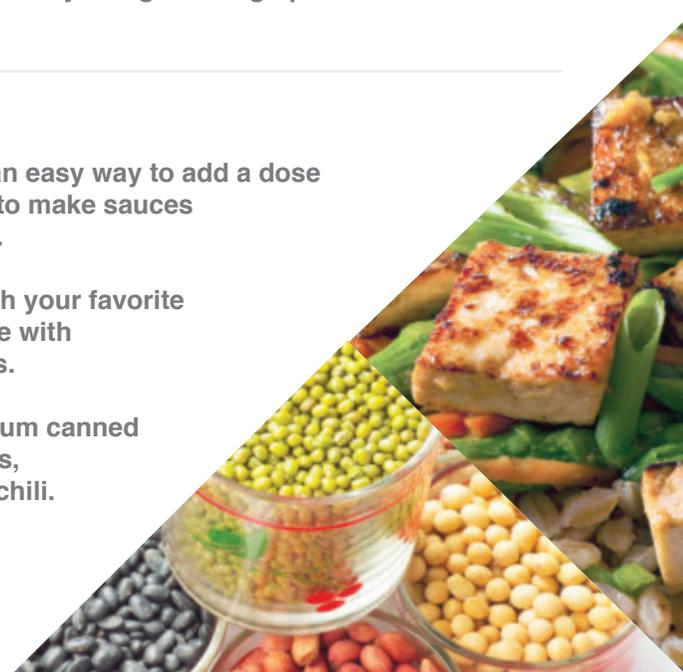
Plant-based protein:

- Cooked beans, tofu, soy milk, nuts, nut butters and seeds

These days, eating plant-based protein meals more often is becoming a popular way to make healthy choices ... and for good reason! Whether you are participating in Meatless Mondays or eating consistently as a vegetarian, you easily can get enough protein for your diet and your family's diet.

Three Tips To Tasty Plant-Based Protein Meals

- 1) **Go nuts.** Peanut butter and other nut butters are an easy way to add a dose of protein and healthy fat into your day. Use nuts to make sauces and dips or add to smoothies, oatmeal or yogurts.
- 2) **Try tofu!** Drain, press and cut into cubes. Toss with your favorite barbecue or Asian sauce and sauté in a pan. Serve with whole grains, toss into salads or stuff into tortillas.
- 3) **Bring on the beans.** Pack the pantry with low sodium canned beans to mix into whole wheat pasta or rice dishes, mash into dips, or feature in vegetarian soups or chili.





Make a MyPlate Protein Packed Vegetarian Dinner

Sweet & Spicy Vegetarian Chili

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

¾ cup low sodium canned garbanzo beans
¾ cup low sodium canned kidney beans
4½ cups water
½ cup each carrots and celery, diced
½ cup low sodium tomato paste
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
¼ teaspoon cocoa powder
¼ teaspoon salt
⅓ teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions:

- 1) (KID STEP)** Drain and rinse beans.
- 2)** In a large pot, add water and bring to a boil.
- 3)** Add ½ cup garbanzo beans, ½ cup kidney beans, carrots, celery and tomato paste. Mix well and simmer for 30 minutes.
- 4) (KID STEP)** In separate bowl, add remaining garbanzo and kidney beans. Mash with the back of a spoon. Stir into chili.
- 5)** Mix in the remainder of ingredients. Simmer for another 5 minutes and then serve with brown rice or whole grain bread and a salad.

<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/child-nutrition-cnp/sweet-and-spicy-vegetarian-chili>



Smart Phone Apps for Vegetarian Cooking:

Garden Plate (free) – Beautiful photographs and deliciously-titled recipes will get you excited about eating more clean and green dishes when planning family meals.

Vegetarian Society Recipes (free) – The oldest vegetarian education organization in the world brings you hundreds of recipes highlighting many different flavor preferences and cooking abilities. All recipes are tested by society members.