CHOOSING YOUR PROTEIN II

Protein only comes from animals right? Think again! Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to get protein from a variety of sources. Check out a few of the ideas below to mix up your protein intake.

by Ashley Sineath, MPH

MORE PROTEIN SOURCES:

1. BUILD AROUND BEANS
Beans can serve as a great source of protein and fiber. A few types that are high in protein include: soybeans (edamame), navy beans, black beans, lentils, or pinto beans. You can eat them plain, mix with rice, drop them in soup, or just enjoy them on the side.

2. GET YOUR GREENS
In addition to the many vitamins and minerals green vegetables offer, they provide some protein as well. For example, spinach has 5 grams and peas have 8 grams of protein in a serving.

3. LOW FAT DAIRY
Did you know that dairy products can be a good source of protein? Items like greek yogurt (watch the sugar) or low-fat chocolate milk can serve as a solid source of dietary protein.

4. NUTS AND SEEDS
Foods like almonds and cashews make a great alternative to animal protein. These nuts are also a source of healthy fat. Make sure and monitor your portions as they can be high in calories. You can also get protein from seeds like sunflower seeds, pumpkin, or chia seeds.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Beyond the traditional animal proteins, there are a variety of recipes and meals you can make that will help you get your protein needs. Keep reading for more ideas:

Meal Planning Ideas

BREAKFAST
1. -2 scrambled eggs or egg whites
   -Fruit smoothie with yogurt
   -Soy sausage patties or links
   -Soy or Almond Milk in cereal
   -Nut butter on whole grain toast with fruit
   -Greek yogurt with low fat granola
   -Omelet with mozzarella and spinach
   -Oatmeal with peanut butter and chia seeds

LUNCH
2. -Peanut butter and jam sandwich on whole wheat bread
   -Black bean or veggie burger
   -Spinach salad topped with nuts, fruit, and low fat cheese
   -Sampler Plate: Hard boiled egg, carrots & hummus, fruit, and pasta salad

DINNER
3. -Veggie pasta with marinara sauce
   -Veggies on a whole grain pizza crust and mozzarella cheese
   -Grilled vegetable kabobs
   -Black bean burritos or tacos
   -Stir fry with brown rice, edamame, and vegetables

OTHER SOURCES:
- Hummus (try with cut veggies or pita chips)
- Quinoa (high protein grain, similar to rice)
- Tofu (soy product)

Sources:
http://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein; livestrong.com

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