



Heart-Smart Protein Power

Evidence-based tips to achieving protein goals while also helping protect heart health.



FOR FITNESS PROFESSIONALS

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TIP #1

PRIORITIZE Plant-Based & Lean Proteins – Pass on Processed & Red Meats

RESEARCH-BASED RATIONALE:

- Red and processed meats are associated with increased heart disease, certain cancers, & type 2 diabetes.
- Lean (chicken, fish) & plant-based proteins (beans, legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu) are lower in saturated fat, sodium, & cholesterol (compared to red meats), reducing risk of high blood pressure & cholesterol, heart disease, & stroke.
- Plant-based proteins offer additional heart-healthy benefits from fiber and antioxidants.¹⁻⁶

Practical Tip: Swap ground beef for black beans or lentils in chili or tacos for a heart-healthy protein with added fiber and lower saturated fat.



TIP #2

PREP with Purpose Using Smart Seasonings & Creative Cooking Methods

RESEARCH-BASED RATIONALE:

- Using herbs and spices instead of salt, and choosing grilling, baking, or steaming over frying can reduce sodium & saturated fat in the foods you prepare.
- Lower sodium & saturated fat intake supports healthy blood pressure and lowers heart disease risk.²⁻⁴



PRACTICAL TIP: Marinate lean proteins like chicken or tofu with citrus, herbs, & garlic instead of salt. Cook by roasting, poaching, or broiling. This will help enhance taste while also minimizing sodium & saturated fat.



TIP #3

PORTION

Protein on Your Plate – Pair with Plenty of Plant-based Picks

RESEARCH-BASED RATIONALE:

- Appropriate protein portions help manage calories and saturated fat, reducing risk of obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.
- Balancing meals with whole grains and vegetables increases fiber, nutrients, and antioxidants, which are beneficial for cholesterol, blood pressure, & digestion for better heart health.¹⁻⁸

Practical Tip: Make a “protein & veggie sampler” with 2-3 lean proteins (i.e. grilled tofu, roasted chickpeas, or turkey) and a colorful mix of vegetables. Serve in separate sections or small dishes for balanced portions and meal variety.





Health & Nutrition Sciences



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