**Protein and IBS: Tips and Recommendations**

**Slide 1**

Hi everybody!

There are proteins in every one of your cells and you need to eat enough protein every day to support both the structure and functioning of your body. Too little can cause tissues to gradually break down. But protein is also a macronutrient that provides you with energy, so balance is key.

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In this video, we’ll start with protein recommendations and what a balanced diet looks like in terms of protein. Most people are worried they aren’t getting enough protein, so I thought it might be helpful to see how much protein is in some common protein sources. Vegans and vegetarians may have particular concerns about not getting enough, so we’ll look at some strategies for plant-based diets and then some general smart protein strategies. We’ll finish up with a few tips about protein and IBS.

**Slide 3**

The recommendation for protein is not an amount, but rather a range which is a percentage of total energy, or calorie, intake.  Carbohydrates and fat are also included in total energy intake and the ranges are set to minimize the risk of chronic disease and ensure that you’re getting other essential nutrients.  10-35% of your calories should be coming from protein.

**Slide 4**

If you like visuals, you could use the plate model.  Obviously, this won’t work for every meal, but overall, your plate should be one quarter protein, one quarter whole grains and half fruits and vegetables.  Use healthy fats like vegetable oils to fry or make dressings or sauces. For example, your portion of steak or fish should be just a little bigger than a deck of cards.

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It can also be helpful to think of your daily calorie intake as your budget.  You only have so many calories to spend, so if you eat too much protein you may not have enough calories to spend on other “essentials” like vitamins, minerals, carbs, fibre and healthy fats.

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Because your body doesn’t store protein like it does carbs and fat, it’s important to eat enough protein every day. There is some debate in the literature about the exact minimal daily amount you should eat, but the following calculation is helpful if you’re concerned you’re not getting enough protein. Remember this is a minimum daily intake and if you’re close to the minimum you should definitely be adding more protein to your diet. More protein may also be required as you age, if you are pregnant or breast feeding, if you are an athlete or have an illness.

**Slide 7**

Protein can be found in many food sources, so if you’d like to look at the protein content of some common foods you can pause this slide and have a look.

**Slide 8**

You may remember from the previous video that proteins are made from chains of amino acids and there are some amino acids that are considered to be essential because we have to get them from our food. A complete protein has all the essential amino acids and an incomplete protein does not. Animal sources are complete proteins, as well as whole soy products like tofu. A few other plant-based sources like quinoa or chia seeds are also complete or almost complete proteins.

But it is also possible to get a complete protein profile by combining certain incomplete proteins like rice and beans. And you don’t even need to combine the proteins in the same meal, as long as you are getting the right combination of sources throughout the day.

Do keep in mind that certain vitamins and minerals, like iron, vitamin D3 and some B vitamins are harder to get if you don’t eat any animal products.

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Some general smart protein strategies include balancing your protein intake using the plate model and mixing things up with some meatless meals using plant-based protein. Keep in mind that protein comes in a “package” along with other nutrients, so opt more often for leaner meats and seafood with less saturated fats and try alternate cooking methods to frying. Aim to eat less processed meats that may contain additives like salt and eat a variety of proteins. Variety is not only the spice of life, it’s also a great way to get different vitamins, minerals, nutrients and other things your body needs like fibre.

**Slide 10**

There are also a few protein strategies that may help improve symptoms of IBS. A high fat diet could lead to digestive issues, so opt for lean meats and seafood and watch your portion sizes. Animal sources of protein have no fibre, so adding plant sources like nuts or grains could help you add more fibre to your diet. Just keep in mind that plant sources, as well as dairy, processed meats and even protein powders could contain FODMAPs that may make symptoms worse. For more on that check out the FODMAP Diet section.