



MEAT & BEANS

Go Lean with Protein

- Foods in the meat and beans group give your body protein.
- Muscles, skin, hair, and many body parts are made of protein. Protein also plays a role in your immune system to help fight illnesses.
- Most people get plenty of protein. Check your portion sizes.

What foods are in the meat and bean group?

- All meat, fish, and poultry
- Legumes—dry beans, lentils, and split peas
- Eggs
- Nuts, seeds, and nut butters

Get Your Protein-Rich Foods



Choose lean meats and poultry. Cut off excess fat. Eat fish often.



Legumes include dry beans such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, navy beans, white beans, lentils, and split peas.



Eggs are a great source of protein. Even if watching cholesterol, most people can eat a few each week. Egg whites contain protein, the yolk contains cholesterol and fat, so eat just one yolk along with several whites.



Examples of nuts include walnuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts and peanut butter, or other nut butters. Examples of seeds include sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, tahini (ground sesame seeds), and pumpkin seeds.

How much meat and beans?

This chart shows how much to eat from the meat and beans group each day.

Calorie Level	Daily Recommendation
1600	5 one-ounce equivalents
2000	5.5 one-ounce equivalents
2400	6.5 one-ounce equivalents

What counts as a one ounce equivalent?

One ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish. Most servings are 3 ounces or more. A 3-ounce serving is about the size of a deck of cards.

1/4 cup cooked legumes (dry beans, lentils, split peas) or tofu.

One egg.

1 Tablespoon peanut butter.

1/2 ounce nuts or seeds.



I Can Do It! Eat lean meat and beans.

- Vary your protein routine—choose more fish, beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds.
- Stretch food dollars and protein—add just a little meat or poultry to a stir-fry, casserole, or stew.
- Trim all fat from meat; drain fat after cooking.
- Remove skin from poultry after cooking.
- Bake, grill, or broil meats, rather than fry.
- Eat beans in main dishes such as in chili, spaghetti sauce, or tofu-vegetable stir-fry.
- Keep canned beans on hand; sprinkle on salads or mash for a dip, such as hummus.
- Add nuts and seeds to a salad or mix with raisins for a snack.
- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry, or else they use up discretionary “extra” calories.



Keep it Safe!

- ✓ Separate raw meat, fish, and poultry from cooked and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing.
- ✓ Do not rinse raw meat or poultry to prevent spreading bacteria to other areas.
- ✓ Cook food to a safe temperature to kill harmful bacteria.
- ✓ Refrigerate leftovers from the meat group right away.
- ✓ Thaw foods in the refrigerator, rather than at room temperature.
- ✓ Avoid raw or undercooked eggs.
- ✓ Wash hands after handling meat or poultry.