



Plenty of Protein on a Vegetarian or Vegan Diet

A myth about plant-based diets is that it's difficult to get enough protein. But how much is enough? In reality, we don't need as much protein as we think we do – the chart below shows the Recommended Dietary Allowance based on age and sex.

Recommended Dietary Allowance for Protein

Grams of Protein	Needed Daily
Children ages 1–3	13
Children ages 4–8	19
Children ages 9–13	34
Girls ages 14–18	46
Boys ages 14–18	52
Women ages 19–70+	46
Men ages 19–70+	56

(You can also multiply your weight in pounds by .36 to get your daily protein need in grams. For instance, if you weigh 150 pounds, aim for about 54g of protein.)

Getting enough protein on a plant-based diet can be easy and delicious. Choose from a bounty of nuts and seeds, legumes such as beans and lentils, soy foods, brown rice and other whole grains, and of course vegetables. Be sure to get a variety of these foods on a daily basis — variety is key with any well-balanced diet, and a plant-based one is no different.

Plant foods are colorful, have wonderful texture, and lend themselves to a variety of cooking techniques and cuisines. An added benefit with plant foods is that they're loaded with beneficial nutrients, fiber and vitamins, while being low in sodium and saturated fat. Here's an example of a day's meatless menu — you'll see how quickly the protein grams add up!

Sample Menu

BREAKFAST

1 cup oatmeal (6g)
 Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons chia seeds (3.5g) or 2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds (3g)
 1 cup soy milk (8g)

➤ **Total: 17-17.5g protein**

LUNCH

2 slices whole wheat bread (7.2g)
 1 cup raw spinach leaves (1g) tossed with ½ ounce walnuts (2g), ½ cup mushrooms (1g).

Dress lightly with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

➤ **Total: 11.2g protein**

DINNER

2 oz. whole grain pasta (7g)
 Sauté ½ cup tomatoes (.75g), toss with ½ cup chickpeas (8g), 2 tablespoons olive oil, fresh basil leaves, salt and pepper.

➤ **Total: 15.75g protein**

MID-DAY SNACK

Almonds (1 ounce, approximately 23 nuts) 6g

➤ **Total Day's Protein: 50–50.5g**