

What is a lean protein

Lean Meats:

- white meat of chicken or turkey
- fish and seafood
- pork - loin, chops and ham made from the loin
- beef – 95% lean ground beef, filets, sirloin or round, trimmed roasts

Trim away all the visible fat or skin from meats and poultry before cooking.

Other lean proteins:

- beans, peas, and lentils,
- edamame
- tofu and other soy-based products
- eggs
- Reduced-fat milk, yogurt, cheese or cottage cheese

Include a lean protein for breakfast

- Lean proteins for breakfast can include eggs – hard boiled, scrambled, omelet or any way you want to fix them! Canadian bacon and ham are traditional breakfast proteins that are lean - or try turkey sausage.
- Broiled cottage cheese toast is quick and easy – spread a layer of cottage cheese on toast, sprinkle with cinnamon and broil until bubbly.
- Beans can be for breakfast – wrap in a tortilla, heat and eat. Add salsa if desired.
- Reduced-fat cheese or string cheese in a tortilla and microwave for 30-45 seconds - easy to eat on the run!
- Try a smoothie made with fruit, Greek yogurt and a little nut butter or tofu or pureed beans (mild flavored beans, like white beans work best).



Eat 2 high calcium protein foods on 3 days

Why do we need foods high in calcium? Eating enough foods that include calcium helps build and maintain bone mass; vitamin D and protein are also essential in this process. Calcium is also key in recovery from a workout as calcium is used in muscle contractions – adequate calcium can help prevent cramping. Many Americans do not consume enough calcium rich foods. Good sources of calcium and protein:

- Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese – lower fat products are recommended
- Soy milk and yogurt
- Protein & calcium fortified almond, cashew or other plant-based milks
- Tofu
- Almonds

Eat meat-free or vegetarian - all day

Eating plant-based proteins such as dried beans (black beans, chickpeas or garbanzo, chili or kidney, refried and many more), lentils, tofu, nuts and nut butters, or seeds can provide easy to prepare protein that is low in saturated fat, high in fiber and filling. There are many easy ways to replace meat with plant proteins! Plant-based proteins are also low cost and create less stress on the environment. Many health benefits are associated with eating less meat including improved mental health and reduced risk of heart disease, some cancers, diabetes and dementias.

Eating meat-free all day can be as easy as having eggs or yogurt for breakfast; PBJ or salad with beans and seeds for lunch; and a bean or tofu-based meal for dinner. See the tips and recipes below for more ideas.

Eat at least 1 meal with beans as the protein source

Add beans or peas in main dishes such as chili, stews, casseroles, salads, tacos, enchiladas, and burritos for some or all of the meat. Easy meals with beans:

- wrap beans in a tortilla with salsa (cheese or guacamole, if desired)
- beans and rice with canned diced tomatoes and seasonings
- pasta with garbanzo beans and marinara or pesto
- chili (1 can chili beans, 1 can diced tomatoes with onions/peppers/etc, chili powder – heat and eat)
- edamame, tofu or other beans with veggie stir fry
- whole wheat pita with hummus and your favorite fresh or cooked veggies (red peppers, tomatoes, etc.)

More lean protein tips:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods>

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods-tips>

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Eat-More-Chicken-Fish-and-Beans UCM 320278 Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Eat-More-Chicken-Fish-and-Beans_UCM_320278_Article.jsp)

3 Lean Protein Recipes

Tasty Tuna Dip

2-4 servings

Ingredients

8 ounces reduced fat cream cheese
 1 can (5 ounces) tuna packed in water, drained well
 1-2 Tablespoon ketchup, hot sauce or salsa

Directions

- Stir vigorously until well mixed.
- Eat with crackers, pita chips, cut up raw veggies or spread on a bagel. Keep refrigerated.



Microwave Omelet in a Mug

Ingredients

2 large eggs
 1 tablespoon cheese
 1 tablespoon diced ham
 2 tablespoons diced red or green pepper
 Salt and pepper to taste
 (Substitute peppers, ham, and cheese for your favorite omelet ingredients to fit your own taste)

Directions

- Combine eggs, cheese, ham, bell pepper, salt, and ground pepper in a microwave-safe mug coated with non-stick spray.
- Microwave on high for 1 minute; stir.
- Return to microwave and cook until eggs are completely set, 1 to 1 1/2 minutes longer.



Oven Roasted Chickpeas

Ingredients

1 15 ounce can of garbanzo beans
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon chili powder
 ¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Directions

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- In a colander rinse chickpeas well. Shake off the excess water and discard any loose shells.
- Line a small/medium mixing bowl with a few paper towels and pour the chickpeas into the paper lined bowl.
- Pat the chickpeas with the paper towel and then remove the paper towels from the bowl. Repeat this step until chickpeas are thoroughly dry.
- Add oil and all seasonings to the bowl and mix well.
- Spread the chickpeas out on a baking sheet and bake for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- If they are not crunchy or roasted to your liking, reduce heat to 250 degrees and roast another 5-10 minutes. Watch closely at this point to avoid burning them.



Black Bean Burgers

Makes 4 burgers

Ingredients

1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
1 teaspoon minced garlic
¼ small onion, chopped fine
½ to ¾ cup bread crumbs or quinoa
1 egg
salt and pepper
cayenne (optional)
olive oil



Directions

- Mash black beans with a fork or potato masher until most of beans are smashed.
- Add desired amount of spices.
- Add ½ cup of breadcrumbs or quinoa and egg.
- Combine all ingredients and mix well. Add more breadcrumbs or quinoa if needed. Form into 4 patties.
- Heat skillet on medium heat and add 2-4 tablespoons of oil. Cook for 5 minutes, turn and cook for another 5 minutes until heated through and slightly crispy on the outside.
- Serve plain, on a bun, topped with cheese or other preferred condiments.

Sesame Chicken or Fish

Ingredients

1-2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts or fish filets
1-2 tablespoons honey
1-2 tablespoons sesame seeds
¼ - ½ teaspoon garlic powder
Black pepper to taste

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350° F.
- Arrange the chicken or fish in a single layer in a casserole dish.
- Warm the honey slightly in a microwave or small saucepan over low heat and then brush it evenly over the chicken.
- Combine the sesame seeds, garlic powder and pepper in a small bowl. Sprinkle the mixture evenly over the chicken.
- Bake uncovered – about 30 minutes for chicken (or until it is cooked through); about 15-20 minutes for fish (or until it flakes easily with a fork).



Microwave Variation: Cover chicken or fish loosely (with waxed paper or a microwave cover). Microwave on high – about 10-12 minutes for chicken (or until cooked through); about 4-7 minutes for fish (or until it flakes easily with a fork).