



Where do you get your protein?

What is it?

Protein is essential for building and repairing tissues, supporting immune function, maintaining muscle mass, and producing enzymes and hormones.

But most people, especially in Western countries, get far more protein than they need.

How Much Do We Need?

- General adult needs: 0.36 g per pound of body weight (about 46 g/day for women, 56 g/day for men)
- Athletes or highly active individuals: 0.45–0.65 g per pound
- Whole-food plant-based diets easily meet these needs when calorie intake is adequate.

Can You Get Enough Protein on a Plant-Based Diet?

Yes. All whole plant foods contain protein. Even foods that seem high in carbs—like beans, oats, and vegetables—have significant amounts of protein. Variety ensures all amino acids are met.

What About Essential Amino Acids?

Plants contain all essential amino acids. Foods like quinoa, soy, hemp seeds, chia, and buckwheat are complete proteins. But you don't need complete proteins in every meal—the body maintains an amino acid pool throughout the day.

Top Plant-Based Protein Sources (per cooked cup unless noted)

- Lentils: 18g
- Chickpeas: 15g
- Black beans: 15g
- Tofu (1/2 block): 20g
- Tempeh (1 cup): 31g
- Edamame: 17g
- Quinoa: 8g
- Oats (1 cup cooked): 6g

- Green peas: 8g
- Nuts & seeds (2 Tbsp): 4–7g • Leafy greens (2 cups): 2–5g

Why Plant Protein Is Healthier

Plant protein comes packaged with fiber, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and zero cholesterol. Animal protein often comes with saturated fat, cholesterol, inflammatory compounds, and no fiber.

Benefits of Plant-Based Protein

- Supports heart health
- Lower inflammation
- Better digestive health (fiber!)
- Lower risk of cancer
- Easier weight management
- Improves kidney function compared to animal protein

Common Myths About Plant Protein

Myth: You need animal protein to build muscle.

Fact: Countless athletes thrive on plant-based diets.

Myth: Plant proteins are incomplete.

Fact: All plants contain all the essential amino acids. Some are just lower in certain ones—variety solves this.

Myth: You need protein powder.

Fact: You can use it if convenient, but whole food is fully adequate.

Typical daily total: 70–90g of protein with ease.

Summary

Plant-based diets provide abundant, complete, and healthy protein. As long as you're eating enough calories from a variety of whole plant foods, protein needs are naturally met—no animal products required.