

# POWER PROTEINS

## Introduction

This lesson focuses on the protein food group, encouraging participants to choose leaner protein options to keep muscles strong without adding unhealthy fats.

## Preparation

### 1. Review the topic.

- Start with the key concepts and discussion guide. The discussion guide provides suggested questions to draw out participants' existing knowledge as well as information you can offer in response to each question.
- Consider your participant demographics and potential interests, and conduct any additional research that may be necessary to prepare for specific questions or improve your own understanding of key concepts (see "Program Guide" for suggested resources).

### 2. Plan your lesson structure.

- Determine whether time and resources allow for a food-based activity or whether you will use an alternate activity. This lesson includes one alternate activity, and additional activity suggestions are available in the "Program Guide."
- See "Exercise for Health" lesson for ways to incorporate physical activity into the lesson, and plan to ask participants to share their favorite ways to exercise.
- Prepare a rough timeline of your lesson and a plan to integrate discussion with the activity. Depending on available time and participant interests, you can integrate discussion topics into an activity or use discussion time to open or close the lesson.

### 3. Plan how to administer pre-test (as well as post-test if this is the final session). See "Program Guide" for details.

### 4. Prepare materials.

- Review the appropriate activity and prepare any necessary materials.
- Choose and print handouts, recipes and pre-tests.

## Suggested Recipes

*Recipes should be based on poultry, fish, legumes (beans or lentils), tofu or low-fat dairy.*

- Tofu with Tomato Mushroom Sauce
- Easy Omelets
- Chicken Salad with Greek Yogurt
- Hearty Lentil Soup

## Suggested Handouts

- "Protein Portion Sizes"

## Key Concepts

Proteins are important macronutrients that our bodies need to build muscle, fight infection and heal wounds. Eating a combination of low-fat animal proteins and plant proteins can provide a balanced diet on any budget.

## Discussion Guide

### *Why is protein important? What foods do you get protein from?*

- Protein helps our bodies build muscle and repair tissues.
- Animal products like meat, cheese and milk have protein, but so do plenty of plants. Beans (including soy), peas and nuts are particularly high in protein.

### *Do you know about how much protein you should eat each day? How can you tell if you're eating the right amount of protein?*

- Most people already get all the protein they need. Most adult women need about 46 grams of protein a day, and men need about 56 grams.
- The USDA's MyPlate model recommends that you fill  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate at each meal with lean proteins like poultry, fish, beans, or occasionally other lean meats. Other higher-protein foods include eggs, dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese, and nuts and seeds.

- Example amounts of protein (exact amounts vary with type of milk, yogurt, beans, etc.)

- 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk: 8 grams
- 3 ounces of meat: 21 grams
- 1 cup cooked beans: 16 grams
- 1 cup (8 ounces) of yogurt: 11 grams



- Instead of looking at grams, you can also aim for 5 to 5.5 “ounce equivalents” per day. What counts as an ounce?

- One egg
- One ounce of meat or fish (half a chicken breast is 2-3 ounces)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cooked beans or peas
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce nuts or seeds

### *What are some strategies for making the protein you eat as healthy as possible?*

- Limit the amount of high-fat, high-sodium meats you eat (like hotdogs, hamburgers, bacon, sausages and lunchmeat).
- Look for leaner cuts of meat like ‘loin’ or ‘round.’
- Cut the visible fat off cuts of meat, take the skin off poultry and drain fat that appears while cooking.
- Choose plant-based protein sources like beans and nuts that are also valuable sources of fiber, vitamins and minerals.
- Remember that while many nuts have healthier fats, they can still have a high fat content so smaller portions are best—try a handful of nuts for a snack. One “ounce equivalent” (one of your five servings) of nuts is  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of nuts, or:
  - 12 almonds
  - 24 pistachios
  - 7 walnut halves

## Suggested Activities

If you have access to basic ingredients and supplies, we recommend planning the lesson around a cooking demonstration or activity that will show participants concrete skills that apply the lesson concepts. If limited resources or time make a food-based activity impossible, use the alternate activity or any of the other suggested activities in the “Program Guide.”

### A. Food-Based Activity: Black Bean Salsa

*Adding black beans to homemade salsa makes a quick and affordable snack or topping for other foods. Feel free to use fresh or canned tomatoes and corn, or add peppers and other spices.*

**Discussion points** to address while preparing food (see Discussion Guide as well):

- Do you ever buy or make salsa? What kinds do you like?
- Beans are a great source of lean protein. They also have plenty of fiber to keep you full longer. What kind of beans do you like? What are some different ways you like to eat beans?
- Salsa recipes are easy to modify to include your favorite ingredients and flavors.

<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mixing bowl(s): one for demo, or per group</li><li>• Serving spoon(s): one for demo, or per group</li><li>▪ Sample dishes and spoons for each participant</li></ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start by deciding whether the activity will be a demonstration or will involve participation. If participants will be preparing food themselves, decide whether they will work alone or in groups.</li><li>• Review “Program Guide” for tips on leading a cooking demo or guiding participants through a recipe.</li><li>• Review ingredients and make substitutions as necessary.</li><li>• Modify recipe as necessary, and print copies for participants to take home.</li></ul>
<b>Ingredients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 15 oz. can black beans, drained</li><li>• 1/4 cup red onion, chopped</li><li>• 1 clove garlic, crushed</li><li>• 1/4 cup tomato, chopped</li><li>• 1/4 cup corn</li><li>• 2 tbsp red wine vinegar</li></ul>
<b>Directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add all ingredients to a large bowl and mix to combine.</li></ul>

### B. Alternate Activity: Protein Trivia

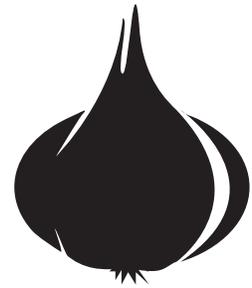
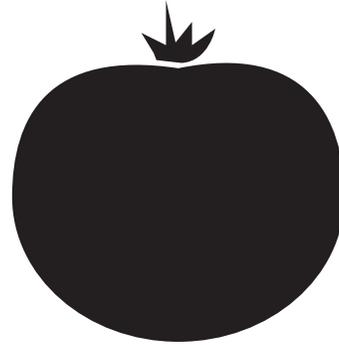
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Protein Trivia” appendix</li><li>• Optional prizes</li><li>• Optional: Posterboard or large piece of paper to write on and thick pen or marker</li></ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review trivia questions and answers.</li><li>• Decide whether to write out letter blanks for hints (as in hangman, see last bullet below).</li><li>• Decide whether to have participants play in teams or as individuals and, if you will keep score, where you will tally each team’s points.</li></ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optional: Divide group into teams (number of teams can vary).</li><li>• Explain game rules (how teams/participants should answer, if you will help them guess).</li><li>• Read each trivia question and give teams/participants a chance to guess.</li><li>• Optional hints: Write a blank for each letter in the word and either fill in one or two letters or allow participants to guess letters until they guess the word.</li></ul>

# Black Bean Salsa

*Salsa is easy to make with fresh or canned tomatoes and corn. Black beans add healthy protein and fiber to keep you full longer. Try this salsa with whole-grain chips for a healthy snack or appetizer.*

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 15 oz can black beans, drained
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup tomato, chopped
- 1/4 cup corn
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- Optional additions: diced mango or peaches, chips for serving
- Optional spices: cumin, chili powder, red pepper flakes
- Optional garnish: cilantro or sliced green onions



## DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a bowl.

Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before serving if possible, to help the flavors blend.