



Shopping and Preparation Tips for Protein Foods

- A three-ounce cooked portion is about the size of a deck of cards. To help you judge serving sizes, a three-ounce portion equals:
 1. 1/2 of a chicken breast or a chicken leg with thigh (without skin)
 2. 3/4 cup of flaked fish
 3. Two thin slices of lean roast beef (each slice 3" x 3" x 1/4")
- Choose cuts of meat that have the least amount of visible fat and trim this visible fat off of meats. Buy "choice" or "select" grades of beef rather than "prime."
- Instead of frying, prepare meats by baking, broiling, roasting, microwaving or stir-frying. Pour off the fat after browning.
- Remove the skin and fat under the skin before cooking poultry pieces. (The exception is when roasting a whole chicken or turkey. Remove the skin before carving and serving the meat.) Choose whole turkeys that have **not** been injected with fats or broths.
- Chill meat juices after cooking, so that you can easily skim off the hardened fat. Then you can add the juices to stews, soups and gravy.
- Look for frozen dinners and entrees that are low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.

Health Benefits of Protein Foods

- Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds supply many nutrients. These include protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc and magnesium.
- Proteins function as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood. They are also building blocks for enzymes, hormones and vitamins. Proteins are one of three nutrients that provide calories (the others are fat and carbohydrates).
- B vitamins found in this food group serve a variety of functions in the body. They help the body release energy, play a vital role in the function of the nervous system, aid in the formation of red blood cells and help build tissues.
- Magnesium is used in building bones and in releasing energy from muscles.
- Zinc helps the immune system function properly.
- EPA and DHA are omega-3 fatty acids found in varying amounts in seafood. Eating eight ounces per week of seafood may help reduce the risk for heart disease.