

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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Vegetarian Sources of Protein

Presented by:

When it comes to consuming protein, our North American diet skews heavily toward meat and dairy products as our main source. Unfortunately, these traditional choices can be high in saturated fat and cholesterol, contributing to problems like heart disease.

Fish is a good protein alternative to meat. But there's a growing concern about the levels of environmental toxins, such as mercury, found in fish.

That's why many people are looking toward plant-based protein as an alternative. Vegetarian sources are often high in fiber and other nutrients. In fact, a 2009 study indicated that vegetarian protein can help lower blood pressure. Due to its high levels in this type of protein, glutamic acid may be the key ingredient responsible for reducing blood pressure levels.¹

Protein plays many vital roles in your body, including growth and repair. It's made up of amino acids, which serve as building blocks for your body to create protein. Amino acids are classified as either essential or non-essential. The essential amino acids are not produced by your body, so you must obtain them from food.

The Recommended Daily Allowance of protein is 0.8 grams per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of ideal body weight for an adult.

If you're trying to lose weight, be sure to include adequate amounts of protein with your meals, as it gives you a fuller feeling compared to eating carbohydrates.

Let's look at some good sources of vegetarian protein.

Soy and Other Beans

Long a staple food in Asian countries, the soy bean is a superb source of protein. It contains all the essential amino acids and is a good source of magnesium, B vitamins, calcium, iron and omega 3 fatty acids. Soy also contains phytochemicals – compounds that help prevent and protect the body from some diseases.

Because of its calcium content, soy is also good for maintaining bone health. In a study that appeared in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, research revealed that post-menopausal women who had a diet rich in soy foods had a lower incidence of bone fractures.²

Exercise of the Week

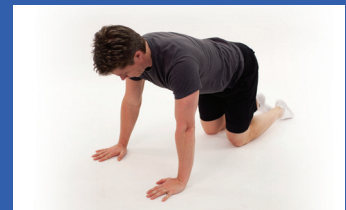
Glute Stretch – Pigeon Pose

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Four-legged position, on hands and knees.

Exercise: Cross one foot/leg under body. Then, slide other leg back as far as you can, keeping hips parallel to floor. Hold for 30-60 seconds, then return to start position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



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Soy bean is the source of many food products, including soy milk and tofu.

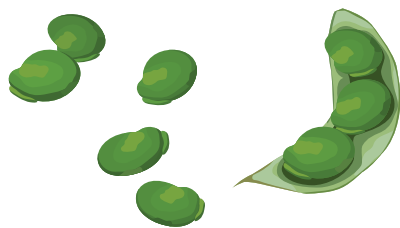
Consuming soy milk can help reduce total cholesterol and triglycerides.

Tofu is bean curd created from coagulated soy milk and is an excellent alternative to serving meat at mealtime. It comes in varying degrees of texture, from soft to hard. But firmer varieties of tofu contain more protein. It also has very little fat, plenty of iron and is low in calories.

Recently, there was concern about soy's possible link to increasing the risk of some types of breast cancer. While it grabbed a lot of headlines, the fact is much more soy research needs to be conducted before a definitive conclusion can be made. The American Institute for Cancer Research makes this recommendation: "Current research shows that it is safe to eat moderate amounts of soy foods (e.g., soymilk, tofu), up to two to three servings per day. As a precaution, women receiving anti-estrogen treatments such as tamoxifen, should minimize soy foods and avoid isoflavone supplements."³

Beans are low on the glycemic index. This makes them a nice way to obtain sustained energy without creating spikes in your blood sugar levels.

Besides soy, other beans that are high in protein include fava, lentils and lima.



Nuts

Nuts are another good choice as an alternative protein source. Keep in mind that nuts are high in calories, so eat in moderation. Nuts contain many important nutrients, such as selenium, vitamin E and omega 3 fatty acids. The good omega fats may be the key reason why nuts may help protect against heart disease.

One study on men and nut consumption indicated: "Compared with men who rarely or never consumed nuts, those who consumed nuts 2 or more times per week had reduced risks of sudden cardiac death and total coronary heart disease death."⁴ Other research reveals the heart health benefits of nuts for women. The Iowa Women's Health Study stated: "Frequent nut consumption may offer postmenopausal women modest protection against the risk of death from all causes and CHD (coronary heart disease)."⁵



Seeds

Another tasty source of vegetarian protein is seeds. For example, 100 grams of pumpkins seeds contain 29 grams of protein. Sesame seeds deliver 26.4 grams of protein per 100 grams, and sunflowers have 24 grams of protein for the same quantity. Many seeds also contain the nutrients phosphorous, calcium and potassium.

Quote of the Week

"Money is the most envied, but the least enjoyed. Health is the most enjoyed, but the least envied."

- Charles Caleb Colton



References and Sources:

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2. Prospective Cohort Study of Soy Food Consumption and Risk of Bone Fracture Among Postmenopausal Women - *Arch Intern Med*. 2005;165:1890-1895.
3. Website of the American Institute for Cancer Research
4. Nut Consumption and Decreased Risk of Sudden Cardiac Death in the Physicians' Health Study - *Arch Intern Med*. 2002;162:1382-1387
5. Frequent nut intake and risk of death from coronary heart disease and all causes in postmenopausal women: the Iowa Women's Health Study - *Nutr Metab Cardiovasc Dis*. 2001



This newsletter is written and designed by Mediadoc™ exclusively for its chiropractic clients.

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