

Tips for Offering More Nutritious Proteins

Go lean with protein

- The leanest beef cuts include round steaks and roasts (eye of round, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
- The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, and ham.
- Choose lean ground beef. To be considered lean, the product has to be at least 90% lean 10% fat.
- Buy skinless chicken parts, or take off the skin before cooking.
- Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
- Choose lean turkey, roast beef, or ham for sandwiches instead of luncheon/deli meats with more fat, such as regular bologna or salami.

Vary your protein choices

- Choose seafood at least twice a week as the meat/meat alternate in a meal. Look for seafood rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring. Some ideas for incorporating seafood include the following options:
 - Salmon steak or filet
 - Salmon loaf
 - Grilled or baked trout, cod or halibut
 - Canned tuna
- Choose beans, peas, or tofu as a main dish or part of a meal often. Some common examples might include the following foods:
 - Chili with kidney or pinto beans;
 - Stir-fried tofu;
 - Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups;
 - Baked beans;
 - Black bean enchiladas;
 - Garbanzo or kidney beans on a chef's salad;
 - Rice and beans;
 - Falafel sandwiches on pita bread;

- Veggie burgers; and
 - Hummus (chickpeas spread) on pita bread.
- Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Some examples might include the following options:
 - Adding slivered almonds to steamed vegetables;
 - Adding toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir-fry instead of meat; and
 - Adding walnuts or pecans to a green salad instead of cheese or meat.

Keep it safe to eat

- Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not wash or rinse meat or poultry.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next one.
- Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices do not drip onto other foods.
- Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms. Use a meat thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry, to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through.
- Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within 2 hours.
- Plan ahead to defrost foods. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter at room temperature. Thaw food by placing it in the refrigerator, submerging airtight packaged food in cold tap water (change water every 30 minutes), or defrosting on a plate in the microwave (only if cooking immediately after).
- Avoid raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs and raw or undercooked meat and poultry.

