

# Optimize Your Brain

## Protein for Mental Health

Small frequent meals that contain protein help the brain synthesize dopamine and serotonin, and stabilize blood glucose to help you feel better. It is also important to eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

## Benefits of eating enough protein

- Less fatigue, particularly in the afternoons
- Better Sleep
- More energy
- Hungry less often
- Better, more stable moods
- Higher metabolism from having more muscle mass

## How much protein should I eat?

The quick calculations for your target protein intake are 8 grams of protein for every 20 lbs of body weight, or simply one-third of your caloric intake. Most people feel better when they eat at least 20 grams in the morning, 20 grams in the afternoon and 20 grams in the evening. The maximum amount of protein per day is 120 grams.

## Healthy Protein Sources

Legumes			Nuts		
Firm Tofu	1/2 cup	20 g	Nuts	1/4 cup	8 g
Tofu	1/2 cup	10 g	Seeds	2 tbsp	3 g
Tempeh	1/2 cup	16 g	Nut butter	2 tbsp	8 g
Lentils	1/2 cup	9 g	Seed butter	2 tbsp	5 g
Refried beans	1/2 cup	8 g	Milk Products		
Whole beans	1/2 cup	7 g	Cottage cheese (LF)	1/2 cup	12 g
Gardenburger	1 patty	11 g	High Protein Yogurt	1/2 cup	8-9 g
Seed Grains			Not Milk or Cheese		
Quinoa	1/2 cup	11 g	Eggs		
Barley	1/2 cup	10 g	Egg, whole	1 egg	7 g
Dark rye flour	1/2 cup	9 g			
Millet	1/2 cup	4 g			
Oats	1/2 cup	3 g	Note: Egg yolks contain nutrients that are excellent for the brain. Clinically, I have not seen milk or cheese serve as a protein source in adults.		
Brown rice	1/2 cup	3 g			
White rice	1/2 cup	3 g	Other		
Dairy Substitutes			Protein powder	1 tbsp	9-15 g
Soy milk	1 cup	6 g	Yogurt (LF)	1 cup	8-14 g
Soy cheese	1 oz	4-7 g	Wild fish	3 oz	21 g
Soy yogurt	1 cup	6 g	Chicken, Turkey, Beef, Pork	3 oz	21 g

Your Weight (lbs)	Target (g protein)	Acceptable Range (g protein)
100	40	36-45
120	48	43-54
140	56	50-63
160	64	57-72
180	72	64-81
200	80	71-90

## Portion control

Here are some visual clues to help you keep servings to the proper size:

- 3 oz of any meat = a deck of playing cards
- 1/2 cup cooked grain = a small fist
- 1 oz cheese = a thumb
- 1 oz nuts = a golf ball
- 1 tbsp nut butter or nuts = a silver dollar or a walnut

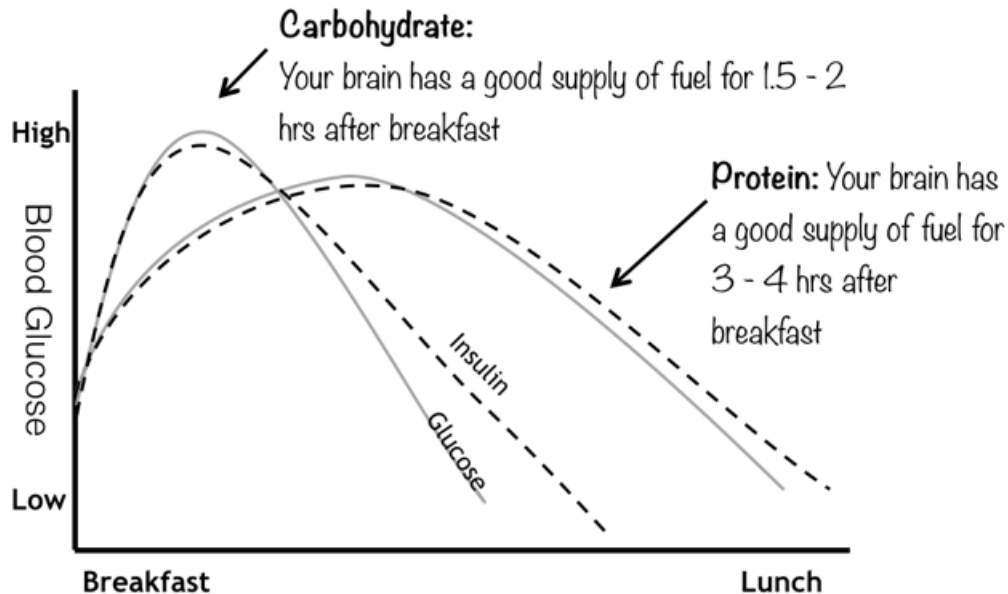
## Use the Lizard Brain Treat when you are:

- Anxious, irritated, and/or agitated.
- Anticipating something that makes you anxious, irritated and/or agitated.
- Not hungry after waking in the morning. Try keeping nuts and juice on your bed stand and consuming the treat prior to getting out of bed
- Hungry, having gone too long (more than 4 hours) without eating.
- Having 3 AM "committee meetings": waking at 3 AM and being sure that sleep won't come for 2 hours.

## Lizard Brain Treat

- 1/4 cup of fruit juice or a 'tot box' of juice
- 1/4 cup of nuts (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts)

## Carbohydrates vs. Protein



### Three Days of Ridiculous Amounts of Protein: Protein Every Three Hours

- 7 AM Breakfast: (14 grams of protein) within an hour of waking  
Two eggs, 1 piece of toast, one apple or pear
- 10 AM Snack: (6-7 grams of protein)  
1/4 cup of nuts: almonds, peanuts, cashews, and hazelnuts  
Or 1/4 cup of cottage cheese  
Or 2 tbsp of nut butter—peanut, almond, and/or cashew
- 12-1 PM Lunch: (21 grams of protein) meat the size of a deck of cards  
This can be a sandwich, wrap, salad, or soup  
Plus 1 cup of veggies and/or 1 cup of whole, real grain—brown rice, quinoa, bulgar  
Be sure that you consume a little bit of veggie fat—avocado, nut oil, and/or olive oil.
- 3 PM Snack: (6-7 grams of protein)  
1/4 cup of nuts: almonds, peanuts, cashews, and hazelnuts  
Or 1/4 cup of cottage cheese  
Or 2 tbsp of nut butter—peanut, almond, and/or cashew
- 6 PM Dinner: (21 grams of protein) meat the size of a deck of cards  
This can be a sandwich, wrap, salad, or soup  
Plus 1 cup of veggies or 1 cup of whole, real grain—brown rice, quinoa, and/or bulgur  
Be sure that you consume a little bit of veggie fat—avocado, nut oil, and/or olive oil.
- Before Bed: 1-2 slices of turkey meat