

## ASK THE NUTE GURU

# THE NUTE (NUTRITION) GURU IMPARTS WISDOM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL, WHOLE-FOODS NUTRITION FOR MIND/BODY WELLNESS.

Q

Hi Nute Guru, I am trying to eat healthier, but I don't even know where to start! With all the talk of macros and timing it can be intimidating. Any chance you could break down a good starting point?

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A great starting point is Protein! It is one of the macros you spoke of, but one that people tend to forget about in our "low-carb, low-fat" world. Read on for all the fantastic things protein can do for your body and your healthful eating journey.

One of the fastest ways to calm your hunger and sugar cravings is by eating protein. You probably know protein is great for keeping you satisfied, but did you know it can also decrease your cravings?

That's because protein puts the brakes on our neuronal reward system, the brain chemicals that make us feel good and motivate us to get more food, even when we're not hungry. When we're low in protein, cravings take over and crack the whip in search of a quick fix. Here are a few ways to combat cravings with protein:

### **1. Many times when a sugar craving hits, your body is really crying out for protein.**

When you're low in protein, your system knows it needs energy, and you crave foods that will give you fuel fast. Unfortunately, those high-sugar impact foods that you're in the mood for, will only raise your blood sugar and trigger an insulin response, which shuts off fat burning.

Instead of reaching for a cookie, fill up on a handful of almonds or a low-fat plain Greek yogurt, that way you'll curb cravings for sweets by giving your body the kind of sustained energy it really needs.

### **2. Make sure you have a protein-rich breakfast.**

One study found that a high-protein breakfast suppresses ghrelin, your hunger hormone, far better than a high-carbohydrate breakfast. Another study found a moderate- or high-protein breakfast curbed cravings in overweight and obese young people. Instead of having a carbohydrate-rich breakfast like cereal that will leave you hungry a couple of hours later, try a protein shake that will keep you full and focused for much longer.

### **3. You should have a sufficient amount of protein in all of your meals.**

How much protein should you consume daily to get those crave-crushing benefits? One meta-analysis concluded 25 - 30 grams of protein at each meal benefits weight loss, appetite and other health factors. Based on my three decades working as a nutritionist, I've found the average woman should get 75- 80 grams daily, whereas most men should get 100- 120 grams of protein a day. That comes out to about four to six ounces for women or six to eight ounces for men per meal.

These numbers aren't set in stone. Your weight and body composition will influence the amount of protein you need. Those needs increase if you're under stress, if you're healing or if you're doing some heavy resistance training.

### **4. Find the right protein sources for your diet.**

The best sources of protein include high-quality animal protein, including grass-fed beef, free-range chicken, wild-caught low-mercury fish and (if you're not intolerant) eggs.

Vegans and vegetarians sometimes find meeting their protein quota challenging, but there are plenty of plant-based high-protein foods like quinoa, legumes and nuts and seeds.

Whether you're short on time or don't have much of an appetite, a shake becomes the perfect higher-protein breakfast that takes minutes to prepare, but keeps you full, focused and crave-free for hours. Those are among the reasons I call a protein shake my number one needle mover for fast, lasting fat loss.

### **5. Make sure you're not rushing through meals.**

Even if you're eating enough protein, you may not be assimilating it well. Speed eating, drinking too much fluid with your meals, not chewing enough, or low stomach acid (including if you take acid blockers) can all interfere with absorption. Low stomach acid becomes a real concern if you're over 30 or under stress, which includes most of us.

Your goal, then, becomes eating enough protein but also digesting it well.

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-20844/5-reasons-to-add-more-protein-to-your-diet.html>

## PROJECT: PFC