



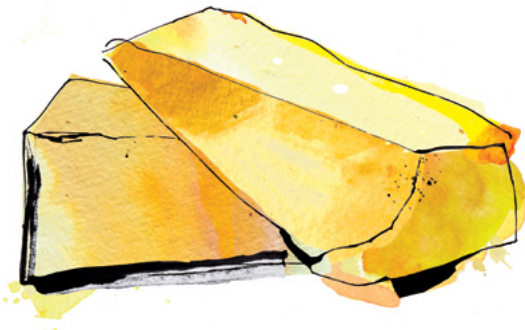
# Protein

## Top nutrients for women

### Why is protein important for women?

Protein supports your muscles, bones and immune system. It provides energy and helps you feel full.

Protein is important throughout life, but your needs increase at certain ages and stages, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding and after age 70. If you're very active, you might also need to add more protein in your diet.



As you get older, it's natural to lose muscle and strength. But it can help to eat the right amount of protein and do muscle-strengthening activities (e.g. lifting weights, walking uphill).

In Australia, most women get enough protein. But some people (e.g. older people and vegetarians) don't eat enough to meet their needs.

### Where can I find protein?

Good sources of protein include:

- lean red meat (e.g. 5-star health rating mince, porterhouse steak, pork loin, kangaroo)
- chicken and turkey
- seafood
- eggs
- whole soy foods (e.g. tofu, edamame, tempeh)
- dairy products (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt)
- legumes (e.g. beans, chickpeas, lentils)
- nuts and seeds.



You can also find smaller amounts of protein in grains such as brown rice and oats.



## How can I get enough protein?

If you eat animal-based protein, a simple trick is to eat a protein portion the size of the palm of your hand at every meal. For plant-based protein, double this amount.

Another option is to ensure one quarter of your breakfast, lunch and dinner is protein.

Between meals, good protein-rich snacks include boiled eggs, cheese and crackers, yoghurt, tinned tuna or salmon, and nuts.

If you eat a plant-based diet, keep in mind that most plant proteins are missing different building blocks (amino acids) that make up protein. It's why many plant proteins are called 'incomplete proteins'. You can get all the essential amino acids by eating different combinations of plant proteins together.

For example:

- legumes and grains  
(e.g. dahl and brown rice)
- legumes and seeds  
(e.g. hummus – made from chickpeas, and tahini – sesame seed paste)
- nuts and grains  
(e.g. stir-fry with cashews served with brown rice – add tofu for extra protein).

Some plant proteins are complete proteins (e.g. quinoa, whole soy and amaranth).

These are good options for people who eat a plant-based diet.



## Still confused about healthy eating?

To help simplify the complicated, we've created seven more fact sheets on these important nutrients for women:

- Calcium
- Folate
- Iodine
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Vitamin B
- Vitamin D

Get the fact sheets at

[jeanhailes.org.au/resources/fact-sheets](https://jeanhailes.org.au/resources/fact-sheets)



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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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