



CS7

COOKING SKILLS AND FOOD

Pick a Protein

Time: 70 Minutes

Learn how to prepare meatless meals and incorporate them into your lifestyle without going hungry. Eating a nutrient-dense, plant-based diet can help you eat healthier and stay nourished.

OBJECTIVES:

Describe the benefits of eating meatless meals.

List two tips for going meatless.

Learn protein portion sizes.

SETUP

- Review resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies after reviewing the [HFL Cost Calculator](#).
- Set up demo station with the necessary activity resources.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.

INTRO (10 Minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in an icebreaker to gauge topic knowledge from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#).

DEMO (10 Minutes)

- Demonstrate content (see demo script).

ACTIVITY (20 Minutes)

- Participants will practice preparing a heart-healthy meatless meal.

RECAP (10 Minutes)

- Pass out handout(s) and invite participants to taste their healthy dish while going through the handout(s) together.

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (20 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#). Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.)



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® 20 By 20 Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans.

© Copyright 2019 American Heart Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit. All rights reserved. Healthy for Life® is a registered trademark of Aramark. Unauthorized use prohibited.

Pick a Protein Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org/healthyforgood

- Video - [Broccoli and Cheese Egg White Scramble on Whole-Wheat English Muffin](#)
- Article - [Vegetarian, Vegan and Meals without Meat](#)
- Infographic - [Protein Portion](#)

Find these resources in this lesson

- Recipe - [Broccoli and Cheese Egg White Scramble on Whole-Wheat English Muffin](#)
- Handout - [Vegetarian, Vegan, and Meals Without Meat](#)
- Handout - [Protein and Heart Health](#)
- Handout - [Protein Portion Infographic](#)
- Handout - [Setting SMART Goals](#)

SPACE SETUP

- Chairs and tables for participants
- Demo table
- Pens for participants
- Folders
- Computer, internet access and projector, if available

ACTIVITY INGREDIENTS* AND SUPPLIES**

- 1½ cups finely chopped fresh or frozen broccoli florets, thawed if frozen
- ¼ cup water
- 9 large egg whites or 1¼ cups egg white substitute
- ½ cup fat-free milk
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 whole-wheat English muffins (lowest sodium available), split and toasted
- ¼ cup shredded, fat-free Cheddar cheese
- Toaster/toaster oven (to toast the English muffins)
- Sauté pan
- Cooking spray
- Spoon (for stirring)
- Spatula
- Whisk
- Large bowl
- Plates (for serving)
- Forks (for tasting)
- Knives (for tasting)

* Recipe serves 4 people; please multiply ingredients as necessary for your participants.

**Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies and ingredients.



SAY:

Becoming familiar with the appropriate amount of protein you need and the numerous ways to get this protein is important when living a healthy lifestyle.



First, let's discuss how to know how much protein you actually need. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) is a complex calculation that considers your age and weight. Generally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend 10 percent to 35 percent of your daily calories come from protein. So, that's about 46 grams of protein for adult women and 56 grams for adult men. Based on weight, growing children and pregnant or lactating women require a little bit more protein than the typical adult because their bodies are building more muscle.



Now that we know how to calculate the adequate amount of daily protein we should be getting, let's discuss what protein is and some examples of sources of protein.



Most of us are actually getting more protein than we need. You may ask, what's the harm in getting too much protein? The main problem is that often the extra protein comes from meat and full-fat dairy products (such as whole-milk cheese), which are sources of saturated fat. Since these foods are high in saturated fats, they can add to elevated levels of LDL – or “bad” – cholesterol. So, decreasing your daily intake of animal fat will decrease your intake of saturated fat.



But did you know that you can get the majority, if not all, of your daily recommended allowance of protein by eating meatless meals of vegetables and fruits? For example, try including beans, legumes, or soy!


- When you take meat off the menu, your meal can become a colorful and delicious variety of foods that will make your heart happy.
- And there are far more options than you'd think! There are vegetarian and vegan substitutes for all your cravings. Whether it's a burger or hot dog, there are plant-based alternatives for almost everything.



Incorporating nutritious plant-based meals in your eating plan can help lower your cholesterol and improve your heart health.



Here are some tips from experts regarding meatless meals:

- Going meatless is as simple as moving vegetables and fruits from a side dish to a starring role.
 - Seek out high-fiber whole grains, beans and legumes, unsalted nuts, and lower fat and fat-free dairy foods, which tend to be high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other important phytonutrients.
 - Start with small steps. Try planning one meatless meal a week.
 - Stock the refrigerator and pantry with plant-based alternatives, such as veggies, beans, nuts, whole grains, and tofu.
 - Find recipes for meatless meals and get your cook on! Find healthy, delicious, plant-based dishes on [heart.org/recipes](https://www.heart.org/recipes).
 - Incorporating meatless meals into your life can help you feel lighter and keep your wallet fatter: people who eat less meat tend to consume fewer calories. Foods such as beans are one of the most cost-effective sources of protein available. Meat typically costs more per pound than other protein sources.
-  Find a balance and choose the right kind and amount of protein for you.
- When choosing protein, opt for low-fat options, such as lean meats, fat-free milk, or other foods with high levels of protein.
 - Starting out, choose main dishes that combine meat and vegetables together, such as low-fat soups or stir-fries that emphasize veggies.
 - Watch portion sizes. Aim for 2- to 3-ounce servings.
 - If you're having an appetizer, try a plate of raw veggies instead of a cheese plate. Even though cheese provides protein to your body, it also adds saturated fat.

Pick a Protein Activity Script

Divide participants into teams to practice cooking an easy and nutritious meatless meal, incorporating a few of the major healthy food groups.

Invite group members to pick up their resources (recipe, ingredients, and cooking supplies) at the demo station. (Alternatively, if you have set everything up at their stations beforehand, participants can go straight to their cooking stations.)



Today, we are going to make a meatless breakfast meal packed with protein and vitamins. You can substitute almost any vegetable you have on hand for the broccoli, including red bell peppers, green beans, zucchini or button mushrooms.



Once everyone has finished making the dish, divide it onto plates and share it with your team.

Broccoli and Cheese Egg White Scramble on Whole-Wheat English Muffin

Makes 4 servings; 1 English muffin per serving
Per serving: 139 Calories; 0.0 g Saturated Fat; 338 mg Sodium



This egg white scramble is a great way to get vitamin-packed broccoli onto your breakfast table. If you're pressed for time in the morning, buy a package of broccoli florets in the produce section instead of starting with a whole crown of broccoli.

INGREDIENTS

- Cooking spray
- 1 ½ cups finely chopped fresh or frozen broccoli florets, thawed if frozen
- ¼ cup water
- 9 large egg whites **or** 1 ¼ cups egg white substitute
- ½ cup fat-free milk
- ¼ teaspoon pepper (freshly ground preferred)
- ¼ cup shredded fat-free Cheddar cheese
- 2 whole-wheat English muffins (lowest sodium available)

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly spray a large skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat. Cook the broccoli and water for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender. Remove from the heat. Transfer the broccoli to a dish. Using paper towels, wipe the skillet clean.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg whites, milk, and pepper until combined.
3. Meanwhile, lightly spray the skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat. Pour in the egg whites. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until almost firm, stirring constantly with a spatula. Stir in the broccoli and Cheddar. Remove from the heat.
4. Just before serving, split and toast each English muffin. Transfer to plates. Spoon the egg mixture onto the muffins.

Add Color Swap: Broccoli isn't the only vegetable that can be used in this recipe. Red bell peppers, green beans, and zucchini also work well. Just chop the vegetables finely so they'll cook for the same amount of time.

Cook's Tip: Substitute corn tortillas for the English muffins to turn this dish into breakfast tacos. You can even cook 1 chopped tomato and 1 chopped fresh jalapeño along with the broccoli to give the filling a Mexican flair.

Cook's Tip on Scrambled Eggs: The secret to perfectly cooked scrambled eggs is removing them from the heat just before they're fully cooked. The heat they've retained will continue to cook them for another minute.

Incorporating nutritious plant-based meals in your eating plan can help lower your cholesterol and improve your heart health. And unlike a strict vegan or vegetarian diet, mixing in some meatless meals won't require you to give up your carnivorous ways.



WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH MEATLESS MEALS?

Well, it seems that leaving out the meat is good for you. In fact, it could help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. Best of all, a semi-vegetarian or flexitarian eating style doesn't require you to completely give up your carnivorous ways. You can totally eat lean meat – just less of it! We'll let the experts explain.

Expert Tip #1:

Most of the cholesterol-raising saturated fats that Americans eat come from meat and full-fat dairy products such as whole-milk cheese," said Alice Lichtenstein, D.Sc., a professor of nutrition at Tufts University and an AHA volunteer. "If you decrease your daily intake of animal fat, you're going to decrease your intake of saturated fat."

WHAT'S IN A MEATLESS MEAL?

What does your dinner look like when you take meat off the menu? Your meal won't be boring and there are more options than you'd think! For example – craving a burger? Try a savory grilled portabella mushroom burger.

Expert Tip #2:

Going meatless is as simple as moving vegetables and fruits from a side dish to a starring role. You should also seek out high-fiber whole grains, beans and legumes, unsalted nuts, and lower fat and fat-free dairy foods. These tend to be high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other important phytonutrients," said Rachel Johnson, Ph.D., R.D., a nutrition professor at the University of Vermont and an AHA volunteer.

Start with small steps.

Expert Tip #3:

"An easy way to get started is to eat one meatless meal a week," suggests Dr. Johnson. Sticking with it can quickly make you start feeling lighter and your wallet fatter: People who eat less meat tend to consume fewer calories, and foods such as beans are one of the most cost-effective sources of protein available. Meat typically costs more per pound than other protein sources.

If meatless is not for you, don't worry. You don't have to go cold turkey on meat to adopt a heart-healthy eating style.

Are you a fan of chicken or fish? Skinless poultry and fish containing omega-3 fatty acids are good protein choices and easy to prepare in healthy ways.

GOTTA HAVE MEAT? LIMIT IT TO ONCE IN A WHILE.

When you do eat meat, choose the leanest cut available, reduce your portion size to no more than 6 ounces cooked, discard all visible fat, and cook in a healthy way to avoid excess saturated fats. And remember, a meatless meal doesn't automatically translate to less saturated fat.

Expert Tip #4:

"You can drop meat, but if you substitute quiche for steak, you're not going to get any advantage in terms of heart health," Dr. Lichtenstein cautioned. Make sure you're making healthy swaps.

MORE TIPS FOR GOING MEATLESS:

- Keep the refrigerator and pantry stocked with plant-based alternatives like veggies, beans, nuts, whole grains, and tofu.
- Find recipes for meatless meals and get your cook on! The American Heart Association offers hundreds of healthy, delicious, plant-based entrées in our cookbooks and from our online recipe center.
- Go veggie at work. If you have access to an office kitchen, keep a few convenient meatless foods you like, such as veggie burgers and vegetarian microwavable meals, on hand for a quick, meatless lunch.

PROTEIN DOMINATES OUR PLATES, BUT DO WE REALLY NEED SO MUCH?

Many Americans continue to be influenced by struggles of the Great Depression, when protein — especially meat — was unaffordable by many families. And in parts of the world where poverty levels are still high, the ability to enjoy meat with a meal is considered a symbol of affluence.

Even as prices for meat have fallen, it continues to be associated with wealth or affluence, leading many families to make it part of every meal, said Judith Wylie-Rosett, a nutritionist and registered dietitian at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in the Bronx, N.Y., and an AHA volunteer on the Nutrition Committee. “People think they won’t feel full if they don’t eat meat,” Dr. Wylie-Rosett said.

WHAT’S THE HARM IN GETTING TOO MUCH PROTEIN?

The main problem is that often the extra protein is coming from meats high in saturated fats, which can add to elevated cholesterol levels of the LDL — or “bad” — cholesterol. And, Dr. Wylie-Rosett says, eating more protein is coming at the expense of other food groups that most Americans struggle to get enough of. “If people would just eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, we’d be full on low-calorie foods,” she said.



Think every meal should include protein? Actually, most of us are getting far more protein than we actually need — especially when it comes to meat — thanks to a variety of cultural factors.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED?

The actual recommended daily allowance (RDA) is a complex calculation that takes into account your age and weight.

Generally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend 10 percent to 35 percent of your daily calories come from protein. So, that’s about 46 grams of protein for adult women and 56 grams for adult men.

SO WHAT DOES THAT TRANSLATE TO IN TERMS OF FOOD?

Drink an 8-ounce glass of milk, and you’ll log 8 grams of protein. Add a cup of yogurt for another 11 grams. Follow that up with a 3-ounce piece of meat — which is about the size of a deck of cards and has about 21 grams of protein — and a cup of dry beans, which has 16 grams and you’ve already reached the 56-gram requirement for an adult man.

The American Heart Association has a guide outlining suggested servings for each food group.

FINDING BALANCE, CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIND AND AMOUNT OF PROTEIN.

- When choosing protein, opt for low-fat options, such as lean meats, fat-free milk, or other foods with high levels of protein. Legumes, for example, can pack about 16 grams of protein per cup and are a low-fat and inexpensive alternative to meat.
- Choose main dishes that combine meat and vegetables together, such as low-fat soups or stir-fries that emphasize veggies.
- Watch portion sizes. Aim for 2- to 3-ounce servings.
- If you’re having an appetizer, try a plate of raw veggies instead of a cheese plate. Cheese adds protein, but also fat, Dr. Wylie-Rosett said.

PROTEIN | PORTION

Our bodies need protein to be healthy and strong, but a serving is probably smaller than you think. Here's what a healthy serving of some common protein foods looks like.



FISH
3 ounces



LEAN BEEF
3 ounces



SKINLESS CHICKEN
3 ounces



BEANS & LEGUMES
1/2 cup cooked



EGGS
1 egg or
2 egg whites



YOGURT
(low-fat or fat-free)
6 ounces



MILK
(low-fat or fat-free)
1 cup

SPECIFIC

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

REALISTIC

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

TIME-BOUND

- When will your goal be achieved?

EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:
