

# PROTEIN SOURCES

## BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Eating a variety of protein foods is necessary to help you and your child get the nutrients needed for proper health and growth. Protein supports growing muscles, which is especially important for child as they develop. The iron in protein foods helps carry oxygen within the blood. Certain protein foods, such as seafood and nuts, also contain healthy fats that support heart health.

### DOES MY CHILD EAT ENOUGH PROTEIN?

Most children eat enough protein foods. However, children do not always eat the variety of protein sources they need. Offering fish or beans at some meals during the week is one way to add more variety to your family's meals.

#### PROTEIN SOURCES:



- Beans/Peas
- Beef
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Eggs
- Nuts
- Pork
- Nut/Seed Butters
- Shellfish
- Tofu
- Soy products
- Seafood

*What if my family omits certain proteins from our diet?*

Your child can get enough protein as long as he or she eats a variety of foods from the protein food group. Protein sources for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans and peas, nut/seed butters, and soy products (such as tofu).

### THE NUTRITION OF PROTEIN SOURCES VARY:

Proteins vary in **fat content and sodium levels**, so it important to consider this when picking your source and deciding how to prepare it. Choosing foods that are lower in fat sodium can help you lower your family's risk of high blood pressure and related diseases.

**Here are a few healthier ways to select and prepare your proteins:**

- Choose lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish) or low-fat cuts
- Remove skin, fat and bone from poultry before or after cooking
- Try grilling, broiling, roasting (to avoid adding extra fat)
- If using canned beans, look for cans labeled "reduced-sodium"
- Use the Nutrition Facts label on food packages to compare and choose lower sodium choices
- Fresh chicken, turkey, seafood, pork, and meat are usually lower in sodium than processed meat and poultry. Examples of processed meats and poultry are sausages, bologna, frankfurters (hot dogs), luncheon meats and loaves, pepperoni, and pre-marinated chicken
- When preparing at eating, limit or omit extra oils, butter and adding salt or salt heavy seasoning!

