Nutritious Bites
Pack a Punch with Protein
Whitney Bignell, PhD, RDN, LD

Eat more protein. This sounds like the mantra of bodybuilders who really just want you to buy expensive protein supplements. However, there is some evidence that older adults could benefit from increasing the amount of lean protein they eat each day.

We tend to lose about 0.5% to 2% of our muscle mass each year – starting around age 50. Our bodies also do not build new muscle as readily as when we were younger. Combined with being less active, it seems that muscle loss is a sure consequence of aging.

The good news is that we can slow down muscle loss – and even build muscle – by eating enough high-quality protein and exercising (especially strength-training). We now know that for most healthy older adults without kidney disease, protein strengthens bones and does not stress the kidneys. Most older adults can increase their protein intake to 1-1.2 grams (g) per kilogram of body weight (hint: multiply your weight in pounds by 0.545 for total number of protein grams).

Pack More Protein in Meals

- 1 egg and 2 egg-white omelet (13 g protein)
- 2 veggie sausage links (9 g protein)
- 6 oz. Greek yogurt (13 g protein)
- 1 single serve tuna pouch (18 g protein)
- ½ cup Garbanzo beans (8 g protein)
- 1 oz. almonds (6 g protein)

Recipe of the Month
Protein Power Breakfast Parfait
Serves 1
Adapted from MealMakeOverMoms.com

Ingredients
½ cup low-fat cottage cheese, + 1 tablespoon
½ cup high protein, whole-grain breakfast cereal
½ cup mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries or blackberries)
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts or almonds
1 teaspoon honey, maple syrup, or agave

Directions
1. Place half of the cottage cheese in the bottom of a glass or bowl
2. Top with half of the cereal, half of the fruit, and half of the chopped nuts
3. Repeat with the remaining cottage cheese (except 1 tablespoon for top), cereal, and fruit.
4. Top with 1 tablespoon cottage cheese and half of chopped nuts

Keep on Moving
Resistance Builds Strength

Resistance exercises are usually referred to as “muscle-strengthening” exercises for good reason – by working your muscles against a force (i.e., weight or gravity), your muscles will become stronger. You only need to do these exercises 2-3 times per week to see benefits.

Before you start any new exercise program, be sure to check with your doctor to determine if you need to modify any exercises. The following tips will help you get started.

- Exercises such as pliés use your own body weight to create force for your muscles
- If you don’t have free weights, use bottles of water or canned vegetables for bicep curls and other arm strengthening exercises
- Exercise bands also provide resistance for a variety of exercises
- Start slowly with fewer repetitions and minimal weight if you haven’t exercised recently
- Rest muscle groups at least 48 hours before training again

For more exercises, visit the following link: http://www.livewellagewell.info/study/2007/12-ChairExercisesUGA113006.pdf

Monthly Chair Exercise
Pliés

This exercise will strengthen your inner and outer thigh and gluteal (buttock) muscles.

Holding the back of the chair, stand with legs a little wider than shoulder width apart and toes pointed outward slightly toward the corners of the room. Bend your knees to lower yourself straight down, using about 2 seconds to do this. Make sure that your legs are wide enough apart that your knees do not jut beyond the toes when you go down. Return to the starting position by pushing through your heels as you come back up. Perform the pliés 8 times, rest, then do another set as is comfortable.
Family Talk

“You just don’t understand what I’m feeling!” When you or someone you love is living with a chronic disease, it’s easy to feel misunderstood by your family and friends. You don’t always feel up to going to dinner on a spur of the moment. You can’t always plan an afternoon shopping trip when your spouse may be having a bad day. You can’t always do what you used to do.

Being able to express your feelings to family and friends is important to be able to maintain your relationships and support system, as well as help you get what you need. Expressing your feelings effectively requires the following:

• **Show respect** for the other person. It’s easy to get into the “blame game,” but being tactful and courteous fosters a supportive relationship so that you can get the help you need.

• **Be clear.** Describe the situation using concrete facts about your feelings.

• **Don’t make assumptions.** Ask for clarification or more details when you feel yourself jumping to a conclusion or interpreting another person’s behavior.

• **Open up.** Express your feelings with honesty – don’t assume people will know what you’re feeling.

• **Accept the feelings of others.** If you don’t understand their feelings, ask for clarification.

• **Use humor (sparingly).** Sometimes humor will improve communication, but steer clear of sarcasm.

• **Avoid the role of victim.** Do not apologize if you have not truly done something to hurt another person.

• **Listen first.** Wait before you respond – this shows that you are processing what was said rather than planning what you want to say.

Source: Lorig, Kate et al. *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions* (2012).
### Test Yourself
### Examining Your Habits

**How am I doing?**

1. I currently eat ________ servings of lean protein most days of the week (circle one)
   - a. Less than 1 serving
   - b. 1-2 servings
   - c. 3 or more servings

2. I currently eat ________ servings of fruits most days of the week (circle one)
   - a. Less than 1 serving
   - b. 1-2 servings
   - c. 3 or more servings

3. I currently eat ________ servings of vegetables most days of the week (circle one)
   - a. Less than 1 serving
   - b. 1-2 servings
   - c. 3 or more servings

4. I currently eat _____ servings of whole grain products most days of the week (circle one)
   - a. Less than 1 serving
   - b. 1-2 servings
   - c. 3 or more servings

5. I currently have _____ servings of milk or other dairy products most days of the week (circle one)
   - a. Less than 1 serving
   - b. 1-2 servings
   - c. 3 or more servings

6. I do strength-training exercises at least two days per week (circle one)
   - Yes
   - No

7. I tend to eat too much sodium or salt (circle one)
   - Yes
   - No

8. I tend to eat too much sugar or sweet foods (circle one)
   - Yes
   - No

9. I talk with my doctor when I have questions about my medications (circle one)
   - Yes
   - No

10. I express my feelings to friends and family often (circle one)
    - Yes
    - No

**What do I want to change?**

This month, I want to do the following to improve my health and well-being:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = low confidence, 10 = high confidence), how confident am I that I can make the change I wrote above? (circle one)

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**Questions or Comments? Contact us!**

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