

# Lean Protein Can Help People Live Well and Age Vibrantly

Sarcopenia is a condition associated with a loss of muscle mass and strength in older individuals. Prevention of this debilitating disease is especially important to ensure people can continue to live well and independently since loss of muscle can decrease stamina, lessen the ability to perform daily tasks and lead to an increased risk of falls and bone fractures. While there is no single cause, insufficient protein intake may be a key contributor to this condition, which can significantly compromise overall quality of life as we age. Given the growing baby boomer population, this condition is becoming an increasingly important public health issue.

The August 2007 edition of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* contains a research study, "Aging Does Not Impair the Anabolic Response to a Protein-Rich Meal" that examined the ability of a protein-rich food to stimulate muscle protein synthesis. The study found that consuming four ounces of lean beef can acutely stimulate muscle protein synthesis by 50 percent in both young and elderly volunteers. These results suggest that lean beef is an effective and practical source of dietary protein for all healthy adults.

This is especially significant since approximately 20 percent of older adults do not meet the USDA's recommended dietary allowance of protein. For the majority of the population, including older adults, the most practical dietary strategy to stimulate muscle growth is to include high-quality protein during each meal.

In addition to the importance of muscle maintenance and sarcopenia prevention, previous research has demonstrated that muscle metabolism may also play a role in the prevention of many chronic diseases, such as type-2 diabetes and osteoporosis. A research review published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* indicated that increasing daily high-quality protein intake may optimize muscle strength and metabolism and ultimately improve overall health.<sup>1</sup>

## Power Up on Lean Protein

Incorporating high-quality protein can be an easy and delicious part of an active, healthy lifestyle at any age. Try these suggestions to enjoy enough high-quality protein throughout the day.

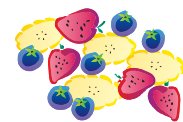
### Breakfast

- Serve up a side of scrambled eggs with your pancakes or waffles to pump up your protein intake.
- Incorporate spice into a breakfast burrito by adding 95 percent lean ground beef cooked with taco seasoning.
- Enhance the protein content of an omelet by adding lowfat or fat-free cheddar cheese.



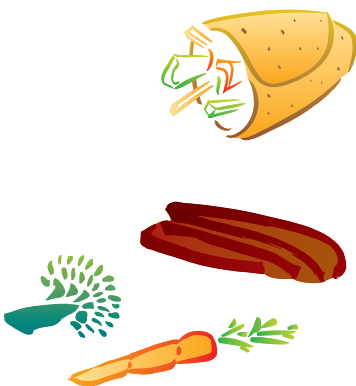
### Lunch

- Power up a traditional salad by adding a hardboiled egg or flank steak strips.
- Make a protein-rich smoothie with lowfat yogurt and fresh or frozen fruit.
- Add slices of grilled pork to a vegetable wrap topped with basil and drizzled with balsamic vinaigrette.
- Pump up mac 'n' cheese by adding lean ground beef or turkey.



### Dinner

- Mix 95 percent lean ground beef meatballs into a tomato and grilled vegetable spaghetti sauce.
- Place lean pork or beef sirloin strips in a stir-fry loaded with fresh broccoli and carrots.
- Load tacos with lean ground turkey, spinach, tomatoes and lowfat cheese.



<sup>1</sup>Wolfe R. The underappreciated role of muscle in health and disease. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2006. 84: 475-482.