

RDs Share Their Protein Tips for Older Patients

Kathleen Weber, RD

- I often recommend putting peanut butter (I suggest "crunchy" peanut butter for texture if the patient has good dentition) in oatmeal. For additional protein, I suggest they cook the oatmeal in milk and add additional milk after it's been cooked if they like their oatmeal to be thinner. My favorite combination is peanut butter, bananas, and ground flax seed in my oatmeal in the morning!

Kathryn Bennett-Chambliss, MS, RD, LDN

Considering protein without the chew that may be difficult to many including those with dentures:

- Add peanut butter to shakes, smoothies (with Greek yogurt) toast, bananas or even any supplement such as Boost or Ensure or add finely ground tree nuts to applesauce, cereal, sweet potatoes etc.
- Fish is an easy to eat, common and high protein food whether fresh, frozen or canned.
- Add pasteurized egg whites to whole egg and other food items.
- Add dried beans, egg whites, cheese, or nuts to salads.
- Use hummus (a new food for some) as a sandwich condiment or dip.
- Add cheese such as a cheese and thin-sliced meat roll up.

Lyn Reeves CDM

Add protein with the philosophy of food first:

- Sour cream and yogurt added to desserts and other recipes.
- Add beans to salads.
- Eggs and cheese added to tossed salads.
- Make smoothies with yogurt, ice cream and fortified milk.
- Add a scoop of non-fat, powdered milk to hot cereals. Also add yogurt to hot cereal.

Becky S Weavill, RDN, LDN

- Loaded mashed potatoes—Mash potatoes with milk, plain yogurt, chives or green onions and top with shredded cheddar cheese.
- High protein milk—Reconstitute nonfat dry milk with fresh milk. Use the high protein milk to make cream soups, casseroles, pudding etc.
- Homemade macaroni with cheese—Macaroni and cheese is a great source of protein when made from scratch with milk and cheddar cheese.
- Fruit smoothie—Blend together fresh seasonal fruits with vanilla yogurt, and fruit juice for a refreshing protein containing beverage.
- Serve an afternoon snack of sliced cheese and crackers and/or a dip made of cottage cheese and fresh herbs and seasonings with veggies and crackers.

Stephanie Perez RD, LDN

- Since older adults still want flavor, I recommend low-fat cottage cheese paired with warmed peaches and cinnamon or frozen blueberries – they love it!

Beth Fishman, MS, RDN, LD

- Cottage cheese packs a nutritional punch! Eaten with fruit and nuts, with veggies, or blended and used as a substitute for cream cheese or a dip, it can be eaten at any meal or as a snack adding 26 g of protein per cup!

Karen Jumisko, RD

- I always encourage my older patients to include a source of easy-to-chew protein with every meal or snack: smooth peanut butter with crackers, yogurt or cottage cheese with fruit, and hardboiled eggs make an easy snack that can be prepared in advance by caregiver if necessary.

Janet Ennis DTR/CDN

Puree small curd cottage cheese to make it smooth. Some people don't like the texture of the cottage cheese; once pureed and flavored, it is difficult to tell that it is some products. You may need to add a little sweetener to brighten the flavor. I also toss in some sour cream with a diet sweetener. Anything I make with ricotta cheese, I substitute with pureed cottage cheese.

- Make pancakes using eggs and ricotta cheese/small curd cottage cheese (whole, low fat or fat free).
- Lemon curd over cottage cheese.
- Blend small curd cottage cheese/ricotta cheese (3:1 mixture) with apricot jam or orange marmalade and put on whole wheat toast (1C small curd cottage cheese and 1/3C jam) or put in oatmeal with raisins. You can add a little more jam if you like it sweeter.
- Lemon curd over Greek plain yogurt or whisk in favored jam or fresh fruit.
- Drop two egg whites into a soup. Whisk briskly.
- Use equal amounts small curd cottage cheese and sour cream and puree it into a smoothie, add small amount of ice cream, fresh fruit, vanilla soy milk, dry powdered milk and/or frozen fruit. May need to add 1 packet of diet sugar/sweetener.
- Cheese cake (cream cheese and pureed small curd cottage cheese) with sour cream topping.
- Instead of milk for cake mixes you can add equal amounts of sour cream.
- Milk shakes---ice cold milk, (replace 1/2 ice cream w/ 1/2 amount of pureed smooth cottage cheese) 1 scoop ice cream, 1/2C small curd cottage cheese pureed, 1/4C sour cream, chocolate sauce, or strawberries or whatever your flavoring/topping blend to thickness you prefer. Add tang for creamsicle shake. Can add strawberries/bananas. These shakes also well—pour into Dixie cups with a stick.

Sheila Ginsberg, MS, RD, CDE

- One important thing to remember with older adults is that they may have chewing problems but won't mention that they do. Even without knowing this info, offer ways of consuming proteins in softer forms such as soups, blended soups, smoothies, and softer solid foods (such as meatloaf, yogurt, cottage cheese, etc.). Often "protein" brings up thoughts of hunks of meat like steak, pork chops, or a quarter of a chicken, both to the older person and the counselor. Or, people jump directly to commercial supplement drinks like Ensure, etc. There is a happy medium!

Sherry Hamilton, MS, RD, LDN

- My top tips for increasing protein intake are incorporating healthy snack options with cottage cheese, and yogurt as well as, also adding 1 tablespoon of dried milk powder to any creamy food or drink.

Patricia Eggleston RD

- Ice cream for dessert
- Meat with meals
- Greek yogurt for breakfast
- Feta cheese and walnuts on salad for lunch
- Almonds for a snack

Vadel Y. Shivers, MS, RD, CSO

- Add skim milk powder to fluid milk to make double strength milk. Drink this mixture with at least 2 meals daily or use it in place of dishes that can be prepared with milk (instant pudding, muffins, cereal).
- Consume cottage cheese and fruit as an evening snack. Consider adding soft fruits such as peaches, blueberries, and kiwi fruit to improve acceptance and flavor.
- Eat more beans at lunch or dinner. Try to include them in salads, soups, or make your own hummus. Hummus could easily be used as a high fiber, quick-fix hors d'oeuvre.
- Experiment with fish such as salmon and tuna during cooking. Add fish and seafood to soups, casseroles, or salads in place of chicken or ham to provide more healthy fats.
- Try consuming various nut butters such as peanut butter, almond butter, or macadamia butter and adding them to Greek yogurt to make a smoothie for a refreshing evening snack.

Caryll DeFrate, RD, LDN

Try quinoa. You can cook it in bulk and freeze in zip lock bags to reheat when needed.

Jamie Johnson, RD, LD

- Choose lean proteins such as low fat dairy products to boost calcium and protein intake and to keep your lean mass and strength without consuming too much fat and excess calories.
- Not a fan of milk or yogurt? Sneak dairy items into foods by using Greek yogurt to thicken soups, as a dip, or as a base for sauces and smoothies.
- Eat a variety of veggies. Some plant foods are sources of high-quality protein, while typically low in fat and cholesterol free.
- Protein takes longer to digest than other nutrients so include a good source of lean protein with each meal and snack to stay full throughout the day.
- Simple substitutions make meals healthier and more nutritious. Replace whole milk and dairy products with fat-free or low fat versions to reduce your total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol intake.

Rose Hoenig RD, CSG, LD

One of the easiest and tastiest has got to be smoothies!!! Milk, yogurt or fruit juice based.

Lindsey E. Joe, RD, LDN

Enjoy "Creamy Oats" by topping your favorite oats with Greek "ice cream" (frozen Greek yogurt of choice). This will satisfy any sweet tooth and can provide a balanced meal with added fruit.

Marge Gensel, CDM, CFPP

For residents that don't meet their daily protein requirements, I will usually add either 4 oz cottage cheese sometimes with fruit or apple butter to sweeten it up a little or 4 oz yogurt as a snack before I would add a protein supplement.

Jeannie Sudberry, DTR

- Low fat cottage cheese is a good choice of protein for a main dish along with a fresh tomato and cucumber or with any variety of fresh or canned fruit such as pineapple, peaches, pears, berries. It is amazing how different combinations taste with cottage cheese as the base any time of the year.
- Increase protein by using sour cream (low fat) as the main ingredient for excellent dips with fresh vegetables. Adding dill, minced onion, and low fat mayo makes a great dip for cucumbers, radishes, carrots, celery, zucchini, and yellow squash.

Wendy E. Clarke

- You may give one bottle of Proteinex (18g Protein) mixed with fruit juice (4oz). Blend a high protein milk shake with 4 oz whole milk, 1 scoop of ice cream and half a banana. Serve as a snack.

Anna Chu, MPH, RD

- Egg white pasteurized products can be used almost in anything that is chilled, needs thickening, or binding; ice cream, fruit smoothies, lasagna, mash potatoes, pies, meatloaf, etc. And, since egg whites are the HBV protein around with no cholesterol, it's a great product to "sneak" in!