

# MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 6

## Plan for protein

**Protein is an important nutrient because it helps the body build bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood.**

Protein can be found in foods such as beef, pork, chicken, turkey and seafood. These foods can provide a range of other nutrients your body needs such as iron, B vitamins, magnesium and zinc. There are also many plant-based sources of protein that we will explore next week.

### Lean choices

If something is lean, it has a low amount of fat. There are lean varieties of most types of meat, poultry and seafood. This can include leaner cuts of beef or pork, chicken breast (instead of thighs) and less fatty fish such as perch. Some types of meat are also naturally leaner than others. Venison, for example, has less fat than beef.

**Choosing ground meat:** Even though turkey is a leaner meat than beef, when buying ground meat varieties, make sure to read the food label because these options come in varying fat percentages. For example, 90% lean ground beef has less fat than 85% lean ground turkey.

**Processed meats:** Unlike lean cuts, processed meats such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage and deli meats such as salami, bologna, ham and turkey are highly processed. Processed meats are those that are preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or by adding chemical preservatives. These meats have been linked to an increased risk for cancer. They often contain high amounts of fat and sodium. With this in mind, aim to choose processed meats less.

### Daily protein recommendations for children

Age in years	Ounce-equivalents
2–3 (boys and girls)	2
4–8 (boys and girls)	4
9–13 (boys and girls)	5
14–18 (girls)	5
14–18 (boys)	6.5

### Did you know?

**Lean cuts of beef include round steaks, top loin, top sirloin, chuck shoulder and arm roast. Pork loin, tenderloin, center loin and ham are some of the leaner cuts of pork. When in doubt, check the food label or ask your butcher.**

The recommendations for this food group are in ounce-equivalents. Think of an ounce-equivalent as one serving. Serving sizes are not the same for all types of foods because different foods contain different amounts of nutrients. (For more information on what equals an ounce-equivalent, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).)

For example, one ounce of cooked chicken breast counts as one serving but one egg (or three egg whites) also counts as one serving.

With this in mind, meeting a daily recommendation of five servings could look like this:

1 scrambled egg, ½ can of tuna, 1 small lean hamburger patty (2 ounces in weight)

OR

2 slices of deli turkey, 1 small chicken breast half (3 ounces in weight)



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### WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

#### Quick Chili (serves 4)

1. Cook **½ pound ground meat** (look for 90% fat free) over medium-high heat until it has reached an internal temperature of 160 °F. Make sure to use a food thermometer that has been calibrated.
2. Without draining, add **one 15-ounce can of kidney beans** (look for “no salt added”), **one 15-ounce can of crushed tomatoes** (undrained), **1 tablespoon diced onions** and **1½ tablespoons of chili powder** to the ground meat. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat, cover and let simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Enjoy! Store leftovers in the refrigerator, or freeze for future use.

Next time, try experimenting with this recipe by adding your favorite veggies such as zucchini or using different types of beans.

Recipe adapted from University of Minnesota, Cooperative Extension Service, Simply Good Eating Recipe Cards, Vol. 2, 2007. Retrieved from USDA Mixing Bowl, Quick Chili, at <https://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/quick-chili>

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