

IMPORTANCE OF PROTEIN



Protein is an important part of body muscle. Our body can't make all the protein we need, so protein containing food must be included in the diet. The best foods for protein come from the animal world (e.g. meat, eggs, canned or fresh fish and other sea food, milk and milk products such as cheese, yoghurt and custard). Plant foods that contain protein include nuts (peanuts and peanut butter), legumes (chick peas, butter beans, baked beans, red kidney beans etc.) as well as soy products.

'Why is Protein important?' Retaining muscle is very important. Loss of muscle means loss of strength and this leads to weakness and frailty. The risk of falling is increased and daily activities can become more difficult. Body muscle is breaking down and rebuilding all the time. If there is not enough protein in the diet, more muscle is being broken down than is being rebuilt meaning there will be muscle loss.

Protein needs are higher for older people than for younger people.

It is important to try and have three protein rich meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Picking at small amounts of food containing protein throughout the day is not as good as having three protein rich meals. For people with small appetites, it may be advisable to eat the protein part of a meal first.

A milk dessert and a milk drink will add extra protein to a meal. Having enough protein at breakfast time can be difficult. Why not go back to "yesteryear" and have a cooked or hearty breakfast:

- Scrambled, fried or poached eggs (two if you can manage) on toast
- Baked beans on toast
- Left over mince on toast
- Sardines on toast
- Cheese on toast
- Peanut butter on toast followed by a milk drink
- Milk smoothies made with milk, yoghurt and extra milk powder.

The protein content of milk can be increased by adding extra powdered milk. Just add two or three tablespoons of powdered milk to a cup of milk and mix well. Protein is an important part of your diet.

DELIVERED MEALS

Whilst meal services may be suggested to older people who are unwell, they can be provided for those who need continued support.

Alternatively, a meals service can also be provided to a person who requires ongoing assistance with meals to support functional independence and wellbeing. The provision of a



meal each day can be an enabler that can improve opportunities for increased participation in life's other roles, such as meeting with friends or engaging in activities.

Home delivered and centre based meals also have the added advantage of allowing people to be well nourished and the potential to monitor a person's health and wellbeing - they are 'More than just a meal'!

RECIPE

Tuna Mornay

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Serve with extra vegetables or salad.

(Tuna mornay can be frozen.)

**Put meal size amounts in airtight containers before freezing.*

INGREDIENTS

425g can tuna, well drained

420g can condensed chicken soup (not 'ready to heat and eat' soup)

1 large tomato, chopped

1 onion chopped finely

1 cup grated cheese

Oil or margarine for greasing the baking dish



METHOD

1. Mix the drained tuna, chopped tomato, soup, chopped onion and half of the cheese together and pour into greased baking dish.
2. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top of mornay, place in a moderate oven 180 °C for 20 - 30 minutes.

TIPS:

- Canned salmon could be used instead of tuna
- Chopped up cooked chicken could be used instead of tuna
- If you don't want to use the oven, simply heat the mornay mix in a saucepan, serve then sprinkle with the remaining cheese
- Keep in the refrigerator for no more than two days. Tuna mornay can be frozen
- Note that can sizes for tuna and soup may vary slightly but this won't matter

FEEDBACK

We'd love to hear from you.

Please provide us with any suggestions, comments or compliments to:

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or

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