



# Protein Matters & Your Pregnancy

During pregnancy and lactation, your need for protein significantly increases. Protein is necessary for development of all new cells. For the duration of pregnancy, experts recommend that protein intake be a **minimum of 60 grams per day**. Women having twins or a multiple pregnancy need even more. Protein is required for the physical growth and cellular development of your baby. It is also required for the placenta, amniotic tissues, and maternal tissues. Further, a woman's blood volume increases by 50% during pregnancy, and protein is needed to produce new blood cells and circulating proteins. **HBMS midwives encourage ALL our clients to consume 70 – 75 grams of protein per day.**

Lactation similarly affects protein, increasing needs by up to 20 grams over non-pregnant women. Protein is utilized to produce breast milk and nourish the growing baby. Altogether, pregnancy and lactation significantly impact protein demands.

Data show that most women living in developed countries usually consume greater than 60 grams of protein daily, so meeting this minimum is usually not a struggle. However, women with severe nausea and vomiting during pregnancy (hyperemesis), urinary protein losses (preeclampsia), or those who follow vegetarian diets are at higher risk. Since inadequate protein during pregnancy and lactation jeopardizes the growth and development of your baby, it is important to review your diet to assure adequacy. Poor protein intake during pregnancy increases the risk for having a low birth weight infant and a recent study suggests there are also negative effects on fetal brain development. Poor protein intake risks your health **first**, compromising the function of your organs and systems.

If you do not eat enough protein normally, finding ways to boost your intake is important. If you know the right choices to make, a little goes a long way. Protein rich foods are identified in this list. For the most part, these food categories are included: milk and other dairy foods, soy products, legumes, nuts, eggs, meat, fish and poultry. The foods below do provide calories, but they are primarily valued in your diet for their protein. Protein is also found in whole grains and vegetables and, while not 'high' protein foods, they do contribute to your daily protein total. Women who follow vegetarian diets should also review the **Important Tips For Vegetarians** handout.

| Protein Boosters   | Serving Size | Approximate Calories | Approximate Protein (gm) |
|--|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Cheese   | 1 ounce      | 100                  | 7                        |
| Cottage Cheese (whole milk)                              | 1/2 cup      | 110                  | 14                       |
| Dry Milk Powder (Lowfat)                                 | 1/3 cup      | 100                  | 10                       |
| Yogurt (plain, nonfat)                                   | 1 cup        | 100                  | 10                       |
| Lowfat Milk / Whole Milk / Chocolate Milk                | 1 cup        | 130 / 150 / 180      | 8                        |
| Baked Beans  | 1/2 cup      | 200                  | 8                        |
| Roasted Soy Nuts   | 1 ounce      | 150                  | 10                       |
| Peanuts  | 1/4 cup      | 210                  | 10                       |
| Almonds  | 1/4 cup      | 200                  | 6                        |
| Black Walnuts  | 1/4 cup      | 190                  | 8                        |
| Brazil Nuts  | 1/4 cup      | 230                  | 5                        |
| Tofu, Soybean Curd                                       | 2 ounces     | 50                   | 5                        |
| Kidney Beans   | 1/3 cup      | 70                   | 5                        |
| Fish and Shellfish                                       | 1 ounce      | 35                   | 7                        |
| Meats and Poultry  | 1 ounce      | 50-75                | 7                        |
| Processed Luncheon Meats                                 | 1 ounce      | 75-100               | 7                        |
| Meat Spreads (chopped, pureed)                           | 1 ounce      | 70                   | 7                        |
| Egg Salad (1 egg)  | 2.5 ounce    | 230                  | 7                        |
| Egg (cooked)   | 1 egg        | 75                   | 6                        |
| Egg Substitute (pasteurized)                             | 1/4 cup      | 80                   | 7                        |
| Deviled Egg  | 1 egg        | 120                  | 8                        |
| Instant Breakfast (powdered mix) / with Whole Milk added | 1 envelope   | 125 / 225            | 7                        |
| Protein Supplement (milk based, powder)                  | 1 ounce      | 100                  | 7                        |
| Protein Supplement (soy based, powder)(products vary)    | 2/3 ounce    | 75                   | 11                       |