



4-H Flavorful

Hands in the Kitchen, Hearts at the Table.

In this issue:

- Build Your Plate: Protein
- Table Talk
- Flavorful Futures
- Vary Your Protein Routine
- Power Up with Protein!
- Shopping List
- Meal Builders

Recipes:

- Quick Breakfast Muffins
- Chicken & Roasted Red Pepper Roll-Ups
- Energy Balls
- Savory Steak Tips with Cowboy Butter

Survey



SDSU Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer in accordance with the nondiscrimination policies of South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Learn more at extension.sdstate.edu.

© 2026, South Dakota Board of Regents

S-0053-08

Build Your Plate: Protein

Protein foods give your body the energy and strength it needs to grow, learn, and play. Foods in the Protein Group include seafood; meat, poultry, and eggs; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products. Eating a variety of protein foods is the best way to get all the nutrients your body needs.

How much protein is needed daily?

The amount of protein you need to eat depends on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity. Find the right amount for you by getting your [MyPlate Plan](#).

What counts as an ounce of protein?

The following examples count as 1 ounce from the Protein Foods group:

- 1 ounce cooked lean beef, lean pork or ham (your clenched fist looks like a 3-4 ounce serving of protein)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter
- ¼ cup of cooked dry beans (black, kidney, pinto, or white)
- ¼ cup of tofu

Food Allergies

Recipes can be adjusted to meet various food allergies and personal preferences. Each recipe in 4-H Flavorful highlights food groups from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Taste Test Reflections

Share your taste test reflections for 4-H Flavorful by reporting about your experience. Reporting is easy and takes less than 5 minutes. Visit the QR code to complete a brief survey or use the following link: https://sdstateoira.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_73sUUVgMaUGIAdg

Respond to the following statements about this month's theme, activities and recipes:

- This month I learned...
- How do you plan to use what you learned?
- What did your family enjoy most about this month's activities or recipes?
- How did you support this recipe with other food groups for a complete meal?

Recipes are taste tested by South Dakota State Fair 4-H Special Foods Contestants.

Table Talk

- What are simple things that make you happy?
- What activities make you lose track of time?
- What do you wish you knew more about and why?
- If you could have a gigantic billboard anywhere with anything on it, what would it say?
- If you could swap lives with anyone, who would it be and why?

Flavorful Futures

Careers in Animal-Based Protein

- **Animal Scientist** – research and improve livestock health, nutrition, and breeding.
- **Meat Scientist / Food Scientist** – ensure safety, quality, and processing of meat and poultry.
- **Veterinarian (Large Animal, Poultry, Aquatic)** – care for livestock, poultry, or aquaculture species.
- **Poultry Scientist / Egg Production Specialist** – work in raising and producing poultry and eggs.

Cross-Cutting Careers

- **Chef / Culinary Professional** – design menus with diverse protein sources.
- **Sustainability Specialist** – find ways to produce protein more sustainably.
- **Entrepreneur / Food Business Owner** – start businesses like butcher shops, aquaculture farms, or plant-based product companies.
- **Extension Educator** – teach communities about food safety, preparation, and nutrition related to protein foods.

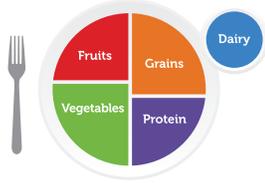
Careers in Plant-Based Protein

- **Agronomist / Crop Scientist** – improve bean, pea, soybean, and lentil production.
- **Food Product Developer** – create plant-based meat alternatives or protein-rich foods.
- **Nutritionist / Dietitian** – guide individuals and communities on balancing protein sources.
- **Seed Scientist / Plant Breeder** – develop improved varieties of beans, peas, soy, and other legumes.





Start simple
with MyPlate



Vary Your Protein Routine

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what protein foods to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Include protein in your snack

Try peanut or nut butter as a dip for apple or celery slices, or as a spread on whole-grain crackers. A hard-cooked (hard-boiled) egg with a dash of pepper also makes a good protein snack.



Keep seafood on hand

Canned seafood, such as salmon, tuna, or crab, is quick to prepare and enjoy. Canned items also store well.



Add protein to your salad

Grilled chicken or shrimp adds tasty protein to a salad of mixed greens. Chickpeas or black beans are delicious, budget-friendly options, too.



Take protein on the go

Pack a mixture of unsalted nuts and sunflower seeds for a crunchy snack. Add some dried fruit like raisins, cranberries, or chopped dates for a touch of sweetness.



Get creative with beans, peas, and lentils

Make chili or stews with kidney or pinto beans, have a bowl of split pea soup for lunch or dinner, or enjoy lentils as a side dish. Check online for recipe ideas.



Serve up lean beef

Broil lean beef cuts like sirloin, top round, or flank steak. Sliced into strips, they're great over greens, in a sandwich, or as is.



Power Up with Protein!

How much protein you need depends on your age, size, and how active you are. Most Americans already eat plenty of protein, but many could choose leaner cuts of meat and mix things up with more seafood and plant-based proteins.

Tip: Try making tacos with beans, swap chicken nuggets for baked fish sticks, or snack on nuts and seeds for a protein boost!

By making smart choices and adding variety, your family can enjoy tasty meals while keeping your bodies strong and healthy.

This chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce-equivalent (oz-equiv) in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake:

Protein	Options
Meats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce cooked lean ground beef or pork 1 slice of luncheon or deli meats (beef, chicken, ham, pork, turkey) 1 ounce cooked game meats (bison, deer, elk, rabbit) 1 ounce cooked lean beef, goat, ham, lamb, or pork
Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce cooked (without skin) chicken or turkey 2 ounces cooked Cornish hen, duck, goose, pheasant, or quail 1 sandwich slice of turkey or chicken breast
Seafood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce cooked fish (walleye, perch, salmon, tilapia) 1 ounce cooked shellfish (clams, crab, crayfish, lobster, shrimp) 1 ounce canned fish (herring, light tuna, salmon, sardines)
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 egg 1 ½ egg whites (or 3 tablespoons liquid egg white product)
Nuts, seeds and soy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) ½ ounce of seeds (chia, flax, pumpkin, or sunflower seeds) hulled, roasted 1 tablespoon of almond, cashew, peanut, or sunflower butter, or sesame paste (tahini) ¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 ounce tempeh, cooked
Beans, peas and lentils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas or lentils (such as, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, or white beans) ¼ cup of baked beans or refried beans ¼ cup of frozen edamame (young soybeans) 1 falafel patty (2 ¼", 4 oz) – plant based protein patty 6 tablespoons hummus

Family Engagement

Family Food Activity: Protein Variety at Mealtime

Protein foods—such as poultry, beef, pork, fish, beans, eggs, or tofu—play an important role in a healthy diet. Poultry, like chicken or turkey, must be cooked thoroughly and is often served several times a week in family meals. When planning meals, variety is important to keep food interesting, nutritious, and enjoyable for everyone at the table.

Family Challenge

Choose one protein your family enjoys (like chicken, beans, or eggs). Together, think of as many meals as you can that use that protein—breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even snacks. Write each idea on a slip of paper and place them in a jar to try in the future.

Each week, draw one or two ideas from the jar to help plan meals and add variety. Talk about different ways the meal could be prepared—such as baking, grilling, using a slow cooker, or stir-frying. This activity keeps mealtime interesting while building menu-planning and decision-making skills.



Photo credit: Heidi Ostrem, Volga, SD

Resources

“Protein Foods.” MyPlate.gov, U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/protein-foods>

Sweeter, Karin. “Chicken & Roasted Red Pepper Roll-Ups.” South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book 2021–2024, edited by SDSU Extension, SDSU Extension, 2025, p. 85. <https://extension.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-4-h-special-foods-recipe-book-2021-2024>

Mack, Brinleigh. “Savory Steak Tips.” South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book 2021–2024, edited by SDSU Extension, SDSU Extension, 2025, p. 89. <https://extension.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-4-h-special-foods-recipe-book-2021-2024>

VanderWal, Callie. “Quick Breakfast Muffins.” South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book 2021–2024, edited by SDSU Extension, SDSU Extension, 2025, p. 102. <https://extension.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-4-h-special-foods-recipe-book-2021-2024>

Jurrens, Aralyn. “Energy Balls.” South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book 2015–2020, edited by SDSU Extension, SDSU Extension, 2020, p. 224.

Shopping List



Meat/Protein

- Eggs (10 large)
- Breakfast sausage, seasoned (½ pound)
- Chicken breast, boneless and skinless (3 halves)
- Sirloin steak, cubed (1 ½ pounds)

Produce

- Baby spinach, shredded (1 cup)
- Roasted red peppers (1 cup)
- Green onions (4, finely chopped)

Dairy

- Butter, softened (2 sticks)
- Milk (½ cup)
- Cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)
- Mozzarella cheese, shredded (1 ½ cups)

Dry Ingredients/Seasonings

- Olive oil (1 tablespoon)
- Brown sugar (1 ½ tablespoons)
- Steak seasoning - Kinder's "The Blend" (1 ½ tablespoons)
- Onion powder (¾ teaspoon)
- Dried onion flakes (½ teaspoon)
- Garlic (2 teaspoons)
- Paprika (1 teaspoon)
- Red pepper flakes (2 teaspoons)
- Parsley (2 teaspoons)
- Rosemary (2 teaspoons)
- Salt (1 ½ teaspoons total)
- Black pepper (3 ½ teaspoons total)
- Peanut Butter (1 cup)
- Chia seeds (⅓ cup)
- Honey (¼ cup)
- Vanilla (2 teaspoons)
- Gluten-free oats (½ cup)
- Mini chocolate chips (⅓ cup)
- Tomato pesto (½ cup)





Quick Breakfast Muffins

Cook Time: 20 minutes | **Servings:** 6

Ingredients

- » 10 large eggs
- » ½ pound seasoned breakfast sausage
- » ½ cup milk
- » 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- » ½ teaspoon salt
- » ½ teaspoon pepper
- » ½ teaspoon dried onion flakes

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Brown sausage in a pan or micro cooker. Drain Grease.
3. In separate bowl, whisk eggs. Add milk, cheese, salt, pepper and onion flakes. Stir in cooked sausage.
4. Spray muffin pan with cooking spray.
5. Evenly separate egg mixture between muffin tin wells. Bake for 20 minutes, or until thermometer inserted reads 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

Source: Quick Breakfast Muffins, Callie VanderWal, South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Project



Chicken & Roasted Red Pepper Roll-Ups

Cook Time: 30-35 minutes | **Servings:** 4

Ingredients

- » 3 boneless skinless chicken breast halves
- » 1 teaspoon salt
- » 1 teaspoon pepper
- » 1 teaspoon paprika
- » 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- » 1 cup baby spinach, shredded
- » 1 cup roasted red peppers
- » 4 green onions, finely chopped
- » ½ cup sundried tomato pesto

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Place chicken breasts in a Ziploc bag. Using the flat side of a meat mallet, pound each breast to ¼-inch thickness.
3. Season the chicken breasts with salt, pepper, and paprika. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Top with spinach, peppers, and green onion.
4. Roll up chicken breasts tightly and place in baking dish.
5. Brush pesto over chicken breasts.
6. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until the chicken has reached 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Serve.

Source: Chicken and Roasted Red Pepper Roll-Ups, Karin Sweeter, South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Project



Energy Balls

Chill: 30 minutes | **Servings:** 6

Ingredients

- » 1 cup peanut butter
- » 1/3 cup chia seeds
- » ¼ cup honey
- » 2 teaspoons vanilla
- » ½ cup gluten free oats
- » 1/3 cup mini-chocolate chips

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Chill for about 30 minutes.
3. Using cookie scoop – scoop into balls.
4. Keep refrigerated.

Source: Energy Balls, Aralyn Jurrens, South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Project



Savory Steak Tips

Cook Time: 8-10 minutes | **Servings:** 6

Ingredients

Savory Steak Tips

- » 1 ½ pounds sirloin steak, cubed
- » 1 tablespoon olive oil
- » 1 ½ tablespoons brown sugar
- » 1 ½ tablespoons Kinders “The Blend” seasoning
- » ¾ teaspoon onion powder

Cowboy Butter

- » 2 sticks of butter, softened
- » 2 teaspoons garlic
- » 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes
- » 2 teaspoons parsley
- » 2 teaspoons rosemary

Directions

Cowboy Butter

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Place the seasoned butter onto a piece of plastic wrap.
 - For a butter log: Shape the butter into a roll, wrap tightly, and twist the ends to seal.
 - For shaped butter: Press the butter into an even, flat layer (about ½-inch thick) between two pieces of plastic wrap.
3. Refrigerate for at least 1–2 hours, or until firm.
4. Once chilled:
 - Log method: Slice into pats about 1½ tablespoons each.
 - Flat method: Remove the top layer of plastic wrap and use mini cookie cutters to cut fun shapes.
5. Serve butter pats on top of hot steak or other cooked meat. The butter will melt and add extra flavor.
 - Butter may also be melted and spooned over prepared meat before serving.

Directions

Savory Steak Tips

1. Pre-heat airy fryer to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Cube steak and place in gallon sized Ziplock bag; toss with olive oil.
3. Mix remaining dry ingredients in a bowl, shake over steak that has been tossed in olive oil. Seal bag and shake steak to cover with seasoning blend.
4. Place seasoned steak cubes in air fryer basket and let “fry” for 4 minutes; open fryer and shake/turn meat. Return to fry for 4 minutes or until thermometer reads 145-160 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Garnish & serve with seasoned pat of Cowboy Butter or drizzle with melted Cowboy Butter

Source: Savory Steak Tips, Brinleigh Mack, South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Project

Meal Builders

Check out the Meal Builders below for two fun examples to help plan your menu! Aim to include 4–5 food groups for a meal and 2–3 food groups for a snack. The five food groups are fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy. Eating from all the food groups gives your body the fuel it needs to play, learn, and grow strong every day! On the lines below, write your favorite meal or snack ideas to build your plate!

Quick Breakfast Muffins

Fresh Cut Strawberries

French Toast

Syrup

Milk

Energy Balls

Chicken & Roasted Pepper Roll-Ups

Savory Steak Tips

Steamed Asparagus Spears

Cottage Cheese

Crusty Dinner Roll

Milk
