



Habit #5: Go lean with protein

The Meat and Beans Food Group gives us protein. We need protein every day. Each member of my family needs 5½ ounces from the meat and beans group each day. I had a hard time learning ounces. But my nutrition educator showed me how.

For one day, we might eat:



- One whole egg (or one tablespoon of peanut butter) at breakfast (counts as 1 ounce of meat and beans).



- 1/2 cup cooked black beans at lunch (counts as 2 ounces of meat and beans).



- One half of a small chicken breast (counts as 2 to 3 ounces of meat and beans).

Tips on serving protein foods:

- It helped me to start using my measuring cups and spoons. I learned that eating 1 cup of beans would equal 4 ounces of meat. That helped me judge how much food from the Meat and Beans group my family eats.
- I take the skin off my chicken and trim the fat off meats.
- I bake, microwave, or broil our meats. This was a big change. I used to fry a lot of our foods.
- I often serve other protein foods like cooked dry beans and peas, fish, nuts, and eggs.

Tips on buying protein foods:

- I buy low-fat or lean meats and poultry (chicken and turkey). They have less fat.
- I use more fish. I buy fresh fish when it is on sale or canned tuna or salmon. Canned fish usually costs less.



Try these low-cost recipes:



Salmon Patties

Serving Size: 1 patty | Makes: 9 servings

Ingredients:

- 15½ ounces canned, drained salmon
- 1 cup crushed whole-grain cereal or crackers
- 2 lightly beaten large eggs
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Instructions:

1. Use a fork or clean fingers to flake salmon until very fine.
2. Crumble cereal or crackers into crumbs.
3. Add cereal or cracker crumbs, eggs, milk, and pepper to salmon.
4. Mix thoroughly.
5. Shape into 9 patties.
6. Heat oil in a skillet.
7. Over medium heat, carefully brown both the sides until patty is thoroughly cooked.

Tip: Replace the salmon with canned tuna fish. For fun, do a combination of the two!

Lunch or Dinner Menu

Salmon Patties

Oven Fries

Broccoli

Peaches

Low-fat or fat-free milk



Bean Enchiladas

Serving Size: 2 enchiladas (6 inches each) | Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 3½ cups cooked pinto beans
(or two 15-oz cans of low-sodium pinto beans)
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 cup low-fat shredded cheese, such as Monterey Jack
- 8 6-inch flour tortillas
- Salsa (optional)

Instructions:

1. Place beans in a large bowl and mash coarsely with a fork or potato masher; stir in chili powder.
2. Wrap tortillas in a damp paper towel. Microwave on HIGH for 45 seconds, or until tortillas are soft and warm.
3. Divide bean mixture among tortillas and spread down center of tortilla. Sprinkle cheese on bean mixture.
4. Roll tortillas to enclose mixture.
5. Spray a 9-inch x 13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
6. Place enchiladas, seam side down, into baking dish.
7. Cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until heated through.
8. Serve warm with salsa.

Lunch or Dinner Menu

Bean Enchiladas

Lettuce and
tomato salad

Pears

Low-fat or
fat-free milk

Sensational Six-Layer Dinner

Serving Size: 1/6 of recipe | Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 2-3 raw, sliced potatoes (medium size)
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon onion, sliced
- 1 pound lean ground beef, browned and drained
- 1½ cups green beans
- 1 can of tomato soup

Baking dish: Use a baking dish or pan large enough to fit all recipe items.

Variation: Use peas or corn instead of green beans. Use your favorite cream soup instead of tomato soup.

Instructions:

1. Lightly oil or spray baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Layer ingredients in order given. Cover.
3. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until tender and thoroughly heated.
4. Uncover and bake 15 more minutes.

Lunch or Dinner Menu

Sensational
Six-Layer Dinner

Whole-wheat
bread slice

Fruit cocktail

Low-fat or
fat-free milk

