

SoyConnection

By U.S. Soy

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From Science to Application: Translating Protein Quality into Practical Guidance



PROTEIN ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: What Clinicians Need to Know

By David Church, PhD

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Prioritize total daily protein intake.** Help patients focus on meeting overall protein needs (often ~1.0–1.6 g/kg/day for many adults), rather than overemphasizing timing or specific products.
- 2. Encourage protein alongside movement, especially in older adults.** Pair adequate protein intake with regular physical activity (particularly resistance exercise) to support muscle mass and function.
- 3. Reframe the RDA as a minimum, not a target.** Clarify that 0.8 g/kg/day prevents deficiency but may not support optimal health, performance, or aging.
- 4. Support flexible meal patterns.** Reassure patients that protein does not need to be evenly distributed across meals. Daily totals matter most, and intake can vary by meal.
- 5. Guide protein quality through food choices.** Encourage a mix of high-quality protein sources (including soy and other plant proteins), while focusing on total intake and overall dietary pattern rather than “plant vs animal” debates.



PROTEIN BEYOND THE NUMBERS: How Quality Impacts Nutrition

By Guy H. Johnson, PhD

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Emphasize both protein quantity and quality.** Encourage clients and patients to meet higher protein needs while choosing high-quality sources that provide all essential amino acids.
- 2. Incorporate complete plant proteins.** Highlight foods like soy (tofu, tempeh, soymilk, edamame) as convenient options that deliver high-quality protein in plant-forward diets.
- 3. Combine plant and animal proteins.** Suggest pairing plant and animal sources (e.g., beans with lean meat or tofu with eggs) to enhance overall protein quality while supporting flexibility and variety.
- 4. Distribute protein throughout the day.** Advise clients and patients to include protein at each meal and snack to support muscle maintenance, satiety, and metabolic health.
- 5. Translate science into simple swaps.** Suggest simple substitutions, like adding edamame to salads, using tofu in stir-fries, or blending soymilk into smoothies, to make protein goals more achievable.



THE PROTEIN SURGE: Guiding Clients and Patients Through Claims and Nutrition Choices

By Brittany Raftis, MScFN, RD

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Encourage label literacy beyond protein grams.** Help clients and patients look at total calories, added sugars, sodium, and overall nutrient quality, not just protein claims.
- 2. Teach patients to interpret protein claims critically.** Note that terms like “high protein” or “plus protein” can still reflect modest absolute amounts.
- 3. Reinforce protein quality and context.** Encourage clients and patients to look for percent Daily Value (%DV) to assess whether a product provides a meaningful amount of protein, and explain that sources like dairy, soy, eggs, meat, and legumes generally provide more high quality, complete protein than “protein-added” foods.
- 4. Help patients use protein strategically.** Focus on meals and snacks where protein meaningfully fills gaps rather than defaulting to “protein-fortified” products.
- 5. Reframe “protein foods” as part of a dietary pattern.** Emphasize that functional, nutrient-dense foods support health more effectively than protein-washed alternatives.