

Transcript – Let’s Talk Food Literacy: Protein Foods – Finding Balance

Lauren Kennedy, Registered Dietitian, appears on the screen and places two plates of whole grain tortillas filled with colourful vegetables and a platter of various protein foods on the kitchen counter. As she does this, images of puzzle pieces pop up in sequence with the words ‘explore’, ‘build’, and ‘connect’.

Hi! I’m Lauren, a Registered Dietitian.

Today’s conversation is about protein foods.

There is a close up on the whole grain tortillas. Both include colourful vegetables, one has cheese and black beans, and the other has tuna as a topping.

You may have heard that protein builds and repairs the body, and is one of many building blocks of the immune system. It also sustains us between meals and snacks and is a helpful part of balanced eating.

How much protein do we need?

An image of a plate appears, with a whole grain tortilla filled with vegetables, black beans and cheese, with snap peas and baby tomatoes on the side. A visual of the Canada’s Food Guide plate appears with text, ‘1/4 protein foods’.

This will look a little different for everyone, but aiming to fill about ¼ of the plate with protein foods is a good goal.

Lauren adds rinsed black beans to a wrap that is already filled with colourful vegetables. Then she shows us a variety of plant-based proteins including black beans, lentils, flax seed, mixed beans, natural peanut butter, pecans.

In Canada’s latest food guide, we see lots of **plant**-based protein foods, like beans, legumes, nuts and seeds - more than ever before. This is because plant-based protein sources are high in fibre, and lower in saturated fats. They are also sometimes higher in healthy fats—this is all good news for heart health. Plus, they produce less greenhouse gases, and often require less water and land than many animal products.

Lauren shows frozen salmon, sole, and canned tuna. Text appears in screen listing omega-3 as a healthy fat. Next, Lauren adds canned tuna into a colourful wrap filled with avocado, red pepper and lettuce, with an apple on the side of the plate.

Fish is a great source of protein. Salmon, trout, sardines and others, have healthy fats, called omega 3s that can support heart health and brain function. Choosing canned fish with little to no added sodium such as tuna can be an easy way to add protein to a meal or snack when you are in a hurry.

What’s the beef with meat?

A webpage of Canada’s food guide appears on the screen. The webpage scrolls down to the protein to the protein section which is clicked. A listing appears of the different kinds of protein. Then we go back to Lauren and she shows a bowl of hard-boiled eggs and a lean cut of chicken.

It’s still there, in the proteins section of the food guide. Beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, pork, —these provide us with important nutrients for growth and development, as do eggs! These all tend to be

higher in saturated fats which we want to get less of. Choosing lean cuts or trimming fat can help. If you choose to eat meat, buying local may be easier on the environment, tastes great, and supports our local farmers. Wild game is another great choice and can even be a source of healthy omega-3 fats.

Different dairy options for protein are shown in screen, including milk, yogurt, and other dairy-free alternatives. Lauren also adds grated cheese to the wrap with black beans from earlier.

Where does milk fit? Although its not pictured on the food guide, plain milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverage are still very much a part of healthy eating and can be enjoyed daily. Milk, cheese, yogurt and dairy-free alternatives are also a good source of protein and can help us get enough calcium and vitamin D for healthy bones and teeth. Vitamin D also helps the muscles, nerves and immune system to work properly. Some people choose to drink milk with meals, and hydrate with water the rest of the day.

Bottom Line: When it comes to protein, consider adding one or two meatless meals to your week to take advantage of health benefits that plant-based proteins offer! Choosing a variety of protein foods and making them a ¼ of your plate, can balance out your meal or snack, and keep you going throughout the day.

Eat well. Live well.

The video ends with an image of a puzzle piece with the words 'Eat well. Live well' on the left-hand side, with food-guide.canada.ca below it. An acknowledgement logo for Food Literacy for Life, foodliteracy.ca, appears on the right-hand side along with 'created by Peterborough Public Health' (logo shown). A visual of the food literacy framework, from foodliteracy.ca appears on the left-hand side of the screen, with 'Food Literacy' pictured in the center of a circle. The following colourful puzzle pieces surround it: 'Food Skills, Self-Efficacy and Confidence, Ecological Factors (External), Food Decisions, and Food and Nutrition Knowledge.'
