

Kidney Disease: Getting the Right Amount of Protein

Your body needs protein to build and repair muscles and bones. But as the body uses protein, a waste product (**blood urea nitrogen** or **BUN**) is produced. If your kidneys can't filter wastes from your blood, the BUN level increases. If the level gets too high, you can become sick. Because of this, you need to control the amount of protein you eat each day. Use this handout to help you.



One portion (3 to 4 ounces) of fish, chicken, or red meat is about the size of a deck of playing cards.

Measuring Protein Content

You know how many grams of protein to eat, but most food portions are measured in ounces. Use the chart below to help determine the protein content of some common foods.

Chicken breast	3–4 ounces	21–28 grams
Chicken thigh	2–2 ¹ / ₂ ounces	14–18 grams
Fish	3 ounces	21 grams
Pork chop	2–2 ¹ / ₂ ounces	14–18 grams
Roast beef	3 ounces	21 grams
Steak	3–4 ounces	21–28 grams
Hamburger	3–4 ounces	21–28 grams
Eggs	1 egg	7 grams
Cheese	1 ounce	7 grams

If You Eat Too Much Protein

Eating too much protein may cause the following:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Fatigue
- Mental confusion
- Increased potassium levels
- Increased time on hemodialysis

If You Eat Too Little Protein

Eating too little protein may cause the following:

- Muscle loss, weakness
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Slower wound healing