



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT NUTRITION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT



HOW MUCH PROTEIN SHOULD I EAT?

Current recommendations from the Canada Food Guide and US Choose MyPlate recommends very small protein amounts, about a small steak per day (or one and a half small steaks for men). This is about 45 grams of protein per day. This is the minimum amount that will prevent muscle loss but it is by no mean an optimal amount, especially for active people.

There are many factors to consider in determining ideal protein intake, including your health, goals, current body composition, and your daily energy expenditures (exercise and general activity levels). The chart below from examine.com can help you determine a starting number, but you will need to find the ideal amount for you through self-experimentation.

Optimal Daily Protein Intake for Adults (g/kg of body weight)

	Of healthy weight		Overweight	Pregnant	Lactating
Sedentary	1.2–1.8		1.2–1.5	≥1.8	≥1.5
Active	1.4–2.0	1.6–2.4		unknown	
Goal	Maintenance	Muscle gain	Fat loss		

Image reference: https://examine.com/guides/protein-intake/#how-much-protein-do-you-need-per-day_

There is evidence that as we age, our protein requirements actually increase, as we become less efficient at processing protein. Protein is important for maintaining strength, bone health and other physiological functions. Lower protein intakes are associated with higher rates of disability in older adults.

Read this study for more insights on protein intake for older adults:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4208946/>

Other interesting articles on protein intake:

Diana Rodgers, RD: How much protein do we really need?

<https://robbwolf.com/2016/11/07/how-much-protein-do-we-really-need/>

New York Times: Lift Weights, Eat More Protein, Especially if You're Over 40:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/07/well/move/lift-weights-eat-more-protein-especially-if-youre-over-40.html>

IS RED MEAT BAD FOR YOU?

Short answer: no.

Red meat, such as beef, bison, buffalo, lamb and wild game (i.e., venison, elk, etc), contain important nutrients that are important for your health, including iron, vitamin B12, vitamin D, vitamin K2. None of these are available in plant foods though supplements are readily available. While you can obtain iron from plants, it is easier (more bioavailable) for your body to absorb it from animal sources. Vitamin B12 is exclusively available from animal (and yeast) sources, and is important for brain function.

In the past, media has reported claims that eating red meat is like smoking or increases your cancer risk, specifically colon cancer. But those claims are largely based on observational studies that do not eliminate confounding factors. In simple terms, observational studies can identify potential relationships between variables (i.e. diet and disease), but they cannot make definitive recommendations. Recent scientific reviews have found no evidence or correlation between red meat consumption and cancer. **Correlation does not equal causation.**

However, this point of view is still prevalent in society today, even in medical realms.

Interested in more about why meat is an important part of the diet for health? Read this article by Diana Rodgers, RD: <https://sustainabledish.com/dietitians-11-reasons-why-im-team-meat/>

Also, the movie The Sacred Cow has a lot of good information on meat and health, as well as ranching and agriculture. You can find more about the movie here:

<https://www.sacredcow.info/about-the-film>



ISN'T MEAT HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Short answer: no.

This goes against the main stream message, including the conclusions of the EAT-Lancet Commission, that we need to eat less meat for the environment. But the opposite is true - we need to eat better meat for the environment. Regenerative agriculture can actually sequester carbon in the soil. White Oak Pastures, which supplies beef for EPIC bars, underwent a life cycle study by Quantis, an independent third party consulting group. Quantis found that White Oak Pastures' beef generates up to 110% fewer emissions per kilogram compared to conventional US beef. In addition, soil carbon sequestration offsets as much as 85% of the farm's total GHG emissions.

What is regenerative agriculture? This is a set of farming practices that improve soil health and sequesters atmospheric carbon in the soil. Soil carbon sequestration has been generally ignored as a potential tool to combat climate change. Conventional agriculture practices such as large scale mono-cropping not only degrade the soil quality, but are net GHG emitters due to the use of fossil fuels in machinery and the need for chemical fertilizers (that are derived from industrial processes).

In fact, only one-third of agricultural land is appropriate for crops while the remaining land is unable to sustain crop farming because it is either too dry, too steep or otherwise unsuitable - this is called marginal land. Marginal land is perfect for ruminant grazing. Ruminants take plants that are inedible for humans and convert it into human edible food - meat. If you are worried about how much land we are using for crops and animals, consider that food waste is a huge problem - nearly 30% of all food produced in the US is thrown away (globally this is the same). Canadians aren't any better - we discard about 84 kg of food annually per person. European and North American consumers are the worst offenders, throwing out between 95-115 kg of food per year, while consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia throw out 6-11 kg per year.

Read about the White Oak Pastures' study here: <https://quantis-intl.com/casestudy/general-mills/>

Also this blog post explains why 4 pounds of beef does not equal the emissions of one transatlantic flight: <https://ghgguru.faculty.ucdavis.edu/tag/marginal-land-use/>

Food waste reference: <https://www.unenvironment.org/thinkeatsave/get-informed/worldwide-food-waste>

ISN'T MEAT HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT? CONTINUED...

Check out this video about [marginal land and animal agriculture](#):

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. The video title is "How Much Land is Used for Livestock?". The thumbnail features a 2x2 grid of colored squares: top-left is blue, top-right is light blue, bottom-left is yellow, and bottom-right is green. The yellow square is labeled "ALL LAND" and the green square is labeled "AGRICULTURAL LAND". A play button is centered over the grid. To the right of the thumbnail, the video title "HOW MUCH LAND IS USED FOR LIVESTOCK?" and duration "3 MINUTES" are displayed. At the top right of the player are icons for "Watch later" and "Share". At the bottom of the player is a dark blue banner with a globe icon and the text "COWS AND CLIMATE".

I WATCHED GAMECHANGERS. IT SAID PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE BETTER FOR HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT. IS THAT TRUE? CONT...

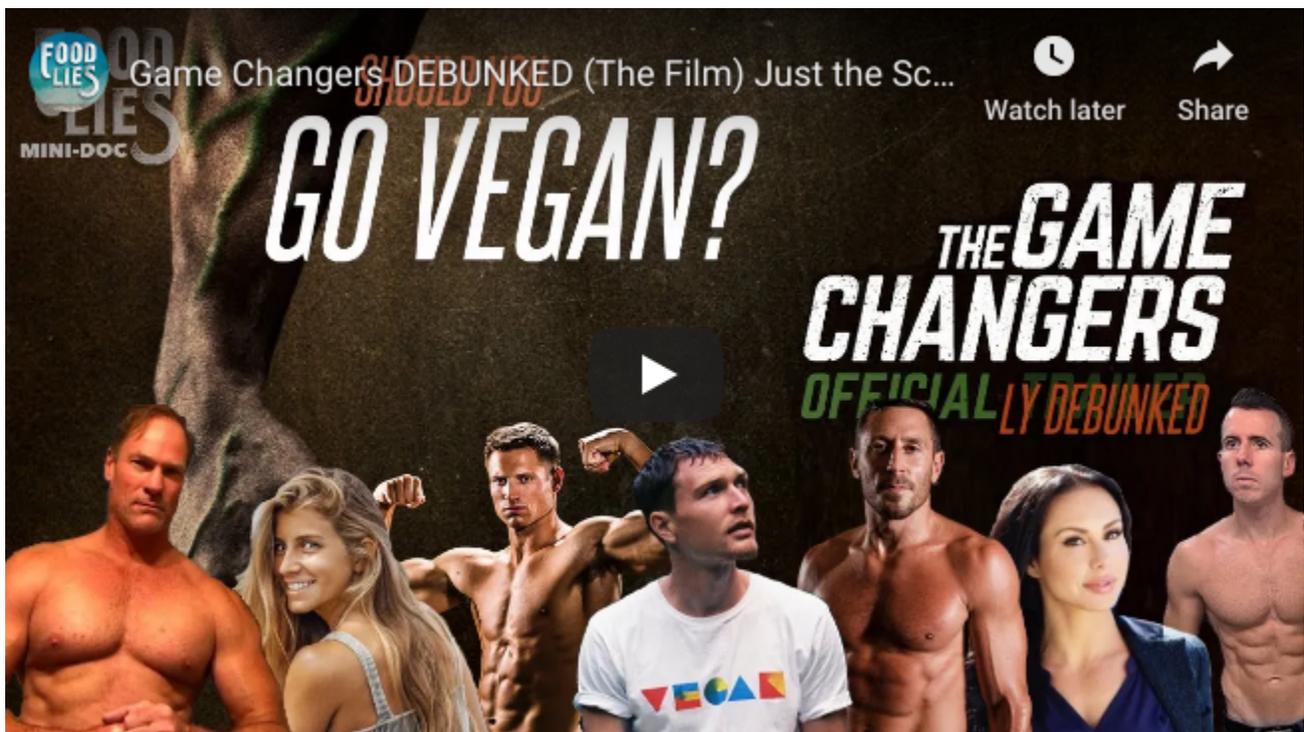
For many of the reasons stated above, this isn't true on either count, and this is a terrible "documentary" based on weak studies, cherry picked data, sensational "experiments" that do not prove anything, anecdotes, and no actual definition of "plant-based".

If you've watched this film, then you must read this three part series debunking the "facts" stated in Gamechangers. Here is Part 1: <https://tim-rees.com/watched-the-game-changers-now-you-must-read-this/>. And [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#).

Humans evolved eating meat (think hunting and gathering), eating plants when animal meat was scarce or for medicine. There are still traditional cultures that predominantly eat animals and insects as their primary source of nutrition. The Inuit and Inuvialuit traditionally ate high protein, high fat diet and until the introduction of processed foods did not experience the diseases of Western culture such as Type 2 Diabetes and obesity.

While I am not suggesting that you eat a meat-only diet, I am suggesting that meat isn't the problem. Maybe it's the processed foods and excess sugar prevalent in Western diets.

You can also watch this YouTube video debunking some of the claims made in the [Gamechangers](#):



WHAT SHOULD I BE EATING? WHAT IS A BALANCED DIET?

Short answer: a variety of meat and seasonal vegetables, preferably those that are available locally.

A simple diet that consists of animal proteins, vegetables and fruit (optional) is optimal for human health. Processed foods, including vegetable oils do not contribute to optimal health and longevity. In this case, simple is better.

Additionally, eating seasonally can ensure that you get a variety of plant foods. Choosing foods that are grown locally also reduces the distance that your food travels, reducing your carbon footprint (and contribution to climate change). It also supports local farmers and workers, ensuring future food security. Farmers markets are great places to connect with local farmers and ranchers. Or talk to your local butcher - most are really knowledgeable and helpful. Also, most grocery stores label food with its origin.

How much to eat? Use your hand as a guide. Use the palm of your hand for a serving of protein, a closed fist for a serving of starchy vegetables, your thumb as a guide for fat. Then fill the rest of your plate with vegetables and eat until full. Your protein requirements may vary and you may need to eat more protein depending on your own personal context. Don't be afraid to experiment.

WHAT ABOUT A “FLEXITARIAN” DIET?

A “flexitarian” diet is one that is mainly vegetarian with small amounts of meat, similar to the EAT-Lancet Commission* diet recommendations for planetary and human health. The Commission recommends very small amounts of meat as a way to improve global health and combat climate change. It recommends only an average of 74 gram of animal protein per day, or only 6% of 2,500 calorie intake. The majority of calories are obtained from rice and whole grains (811 calories) as well as 8 teaspoons of added sugar.

The majority of global calories already come from plant sources. Reducing consumption of animal sources of calories will not add to the land available for farming or improve health outcomes, especially in places where food is scarce. There are many places in the world where grazing animals can provide a source of reliable nutrition (and income) while plant-based agriculture is unable to survive (i.e. water scarcity). In addition, animal protein plays a vital role in the development of children's brains and bodies.

*EAT is an independent, non-profit organization based in Oslo, Norway and founded by the Stordalen Foundation, Wellcome Trust and the Stockholm Resilience Centre. It is important to note that the World Health Organization retracted its support of the Commission's diet recommendations.

Eating a protein rich diet will ensure you have enough protein for your needs, and also help keep you full, minimizing your cravings for highly palatable, low nutrition junk foods.

Read about how EAT Lancet study wrongly vilifies meat: <https://sustainabledish.com/20-ways-eat-lancets-global-diet-is-wrongfully-vilifying-meat/>

I HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE. DOES SALT INCREASE BLOOD PRESSURE?

Short answer: no. It's not that simple.

The current recommended daily amount of salt for adults is 2,300 mg for cardiovascular health, including high blood pressure. However, newer research does not support this position and suggests that salt intake less than 2,300 mg/day increases the risk of cardiovascular events (e.g. heart attack and stroke). Participants in the Framingham Offspring Study that consumed less than 2,500 mg of sodium per day were found to have higher blood pressure than those who consumed high quantities (more than 2,500 mg but less than 8,000 mg).

"These long-term data from the Framingham Study provide no support for lowering sodium intakes among healthy adults to below 2.3 g/day as recommended."

If you don't eat processed foods, your salt intake will naturally be lower. Additionally, potassium, magnesium and calcium seem to influence blood pressure. Electrolytes can be an important part of your diet, especially if you are exercising or the weather is warmer.

Read more about potassium here:

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/317099#Potassium-as-important-as-sodium>

Or read the scientific study here:

https://faseb.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1096/fasebj.31.1_supplement.446.6

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can contact Samantha [here](#).

ABOUT SAMANTHA

Samantha is Engineered Bodies' health coach and a passionate advocate for locally grown and raised whole foods and regenerative agriculture. She has explored and studied meditation and Ki training, spent countless hours researching food and its interactions with health, as well as experimenting in the kitchen. She is a Certified Primal Health Coach.