When Cooking Is Not Happening

Grab-and-go protein, and what to look at on the label.

Convenience products are the difference between hitting your number and missing it on a busy day. They are not better than food, they are better than skipping.

Protein water

- Clear, fruit-flavored, usually whey isolate
- Typical range 15 to 30 g per bottle
- Most are 60 to 130 calories, zero or near-zero sugar
- On shelves: Isopure Clear, Genius Gourmet, Protein2o, Ready, Trimino

Protein coffee

- Ready to drink, or powders you add to your own coffee
- Typical range 10 to 30 g per bottle
- On shelves: Slate, Throne, Starbucks Coffee & Protein, Premier Protein café flavors, Chike, Javvy
- Watch the sugar. Slate runs ~1 g; some lattes, Throne included, carry 20 g or more

Ready-to-drink shakes

- Typical range 20 to 42 g per bottle
- On shelves: Nurri, fairlife Core Power, Premier Protein, Quest
- Dairy free and plant based options are on the next page

Fridge and pantry

- Cottage cheese cups ~13 to 19 g
- Skyr and Greek yogurt cups ~15 to 20 g
- Meat sticks ~9 to 10 g each
- Cheese crisps ~10 g per bag
- Hard boiled eggs ~6 g each
- Roasted edamame ~11 g per ¼ cup
- Tuna or salmon pouches ~16 to 20 g

READING THE LABEL IN TEN SECONDS

Protein per serving, and check whether the bottle is one serving or two.

Added sugar. Coffee and dessert flavors are where it hides.

Third-party tested. NSF Certified for Sport or Informed Sport on the label.

IF YOU ARE ON A GLP-1

Appetite is lower, so protein has to be deliberate rather than incidental. Drinkable protein is often easier to get down than a plate of food, and on the days when eating is hard it is the most reliable way to protect lean muscle.

Resistance training matters even more than protein for holding on to muscle. Protein supports it.

IS A SHAKE AS GOOD AS FOOD?

For hitting your number, yes. Food brings fiber, micronutrients and fullness that a shake does not, so use drinks to fill gaps rather than to replace meals.

IS MORE ALWAYS BETTER?

No. Past your target the extra is just calories. If you have kidney or liver disease, your target is a conversation with your provider, not a general guideline.

DOES TIMING MATTER?

Less than the total. Hitting your number across the day matters more than splitting it perfectly across meals.

Brand names are examples of what you will find on local shelves and are not endorsements or recommendations. Formulations change, so check the label. Grams are approximate. This handout is general education and not a substitute for personal medical advice.

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Continued — plant-based options, bars, and what we carry.

Same idea as the page before: these close a gap on a busy day. Grams are what the label claims; formulations change often, so the label always wins over this sheet.

Plant-based and dairy free

- OWYN, ready to drink ~20 g per bottle
- OWYN Pro Elite ~32 g per bottle
- Ka'Chava, powder ~25 g per serving
- Truvani, powder ~20 g per serving

- Pea, pumpkin seed, brown rice and hemp are the usual bases
- Plant powders often run thicker and grittier than whey. That is texture, not quality
- Ka'Chava is built as a meal shake rather than a straight protein powder, so it carries more calories and more carbohydrate

READING A BAR IN TEN SECONDS

Protein against sugar. A bar with 12 g of protein and 15 g of sugar is a candy bar wearing a costume.

Fiber helps. Bars in the 5 to 13 g fiber range hold you longer.

Sugar alcohols. Common in low-sugar bars and a frequent cause of bloating. If bars upset your stomach, this is usually why.

Protein bars

- Legion ~20 g per bar
- ALOHA, plant based ~14 g per bar
- IQBAR, plant based ~12 g per bar
- Promix and Transparent Labs, both third-party tested

- Most bars land between 10 and 20 g. Treat one as a snack that closes a gap, not as a meal
- ALOHA and IQBAR are plant based, so they cover dairy free and vegetarian at the same time

In our office

- PerfectAmino 5 g serving

PERFECTAMINO

Essential amino acids in a fixed ratio rather than a protein powder. BodyHealth describes it as up to 99% utilized to build new protein and collagen, without the caloric impact of other protein and collagen sources, and in a form that can be fully absorbed almost regardless of the state of your digestive system.*

A serving is 5 grams. **If you are tracking grams toward a daily protein target, count the number on the label.**

Ask us whether it fits your plan.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

THE HONEST SUMMARY

None of it is better than a meal. Drinks, bars and powders exist because a busy day otherwise ends with you 40 grams short, and 40 grams short every day is what costs you muscle over a year. Use them to close gaps, and keep food as the default.

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