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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Sarcopenia and Preventing Age-Related Muscle Loss**

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From the time we are born until sometime in our 30's, our muscles grow larger and stronger. By the time we reach late 30's to early 40's, we are already starting to lose muscle mass and function. This is called age-related sarcopenia. Physically inactive people can lose as much as 3 to 5 percent of their muscle mass each decade after age 30. Even active people will still have muscle loss with age.

Age related factors that influence this include:

- Change in hormone levels
- Increase in protein requirements in the diet
- Nerves that affect movement die
- People tend to become more sedentary

We all want to age well and keep our strength and independence as long as possible. Preventing sarcopenia can help. Sarcopenia has a strong connection to lowered independence in older adults. It is also associated with increased health care costs, frailty and falls.

### **What are the signs of sarcopenia?**

Sarcopenia is identified by a decrease in the size of muscle in the arms and legs, low hand strength and/or slow walking ability.

A loss of muscle mass can lead to:

- Increased weakness
- Loss of stamina
- Aches
- Chronic injuries
- Poor balance
- Difficulty swallowing

### **Is sarcopenia unavoidable?**

Sarcopenia seems to be preventable through adequate protein intake and regular exercise. Strength training or resistance exercise is the best way to maintain your muscle mass, and making diet and exercise changes in the beginning of late adulthood can most effectively prevent sarcopenia.

## How much exercise should I get?

Try for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate exercise per day or 150 minutes per week. The 30 to 60 minutes can be broken into 10-minute segments throughout the day. Include 15 minutes of strength/resistance training two times per week. This may include working with weights, using strength/resistance bands and/or resistance against your own body weight.

## How much protein is enough?

The current Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein in adults age 51+ is 0.36 grams of protein per pound (body weight). For example, a 160-pound person would need 57.6 grams of protein (160 pounds x 0.36).

The current RDA recommendation does not take into consideration age-related muscle loss. Recent research suggests that older adults should consume between 25-30 grams of protein per meal (75 to 90 grams of total protein) to help maintain their muscle mass and function. This is much higher than the RDA for some people.

## Easy ways to include protein everyday:

Choose high protein snacks.

- Add a slice of cheese or 1 to 2 Tablespoons of peanut butter to crackers, bread or raw vegetables.
- Eat 2 to 3 Tablespoons hummus (mashed chickpeas) with raw veggies or crackers.
- Snack on nuts and/or seeds.

Eat protein at breakfast.

- Regularly include eggs or egg whites.
- Put peanut butter or cheese on toast or an English muffin.
- Add ¼ cup black beans to 1 to 2 scrambled eggs and eat that with salsa.
- Add chopped nuts to hot or cold cereal or yogurt.
- Make a quesadilla by spreading 2 Tablespoons hummus on half a whole wheat tortilla; add raw veggies such as sliced pepper, mushroom or spinach; sprinkle with shredded cheese; fold the tortilla shell in half (like a taco shell) and heat in a pan or microwave until cheese melts.

Try these protein-rich recipes from ISU Extension and Outreach *Spend Smart Eat Smart* website:

- After School Hummus - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/after-school-hummus/>
- Easy Bean Dip - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/easy-bean-dip/>
- Crunchy Apple Roll Up - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/crunchy-apple-roll/>
- Whole Meal Salad - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/whole-meal-salad/>
- Slow Cooker Mexican Chicken Soup - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/slow-cooker-mexican-chicken-soup/>
- Pork Loin and Vegetables - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/pork-loin-vegetables/>
- Salmon Patties - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/salmon-patties/>
- Creamy Egg Salad Sandwich - <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/creamy-egg-salad-sandwich/>

Enjoy a nutritious balanced diet with plenty of protein and daily physical activity to ensure muscle strength for years to come.

Source: ISU Extension and Outreach publication: *Stay Independent; Prevent Sarcopenia, HS 54*

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