

# The power of protein

Protein is an important nutrient for your body that helps build muscle, repair tissue and fight infection. Albumin is a type of protein made by your liver that is a good indicator of your overall protein status and well-being.

## Watch for low albumin

Your monthly labs measure your albumin level. A level below 4.0 can be due to a variety of things. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms below, talk to your dietitian to pinpoint the cause of your low albumin.

High blood sugar levels	Weakness or exhaustion
Swelling in your legs, feet or hands	Nausea or changes in your appetite
Shortness of breath	Dry or itchy skin

## Maintain a healthy albumin level

Eating the right amount of protein will help you:

- /// Stay healthy and out of the hospital
- /// Fight infections
- /// Prevent muscle loss
- /// Recover faster after being sick or having surgery
- /// Remove fluid more easily during dialysis



### Know your number

A target albumin level is greater than or equal to

**4.0 mg/dL**

My most recent albumin level is \_\_\_\_\_ (mg/dL)

- On target:** Keep up the good work!
- Too low:** Talk to your dietitian for tips on increasing your albumin level.



### KEEP YOUR ALBUMIN LEVEL ON TRACK

Work with your dietitian to create a high-protein meal plan and visit [FreseniusKidneyCare.com/Protein](https://www.freseniuskidneycare.com/Protein) for ideas and recipes.

# Protein-packed tips for a dialysis diet



## Try a high-protein supplement

Protein bars, shakes, powders and liquids are a great way to add protein to your diet. Read nutrition labels and talk to your dietitian to choose a supplement with at least 15g of protein, less than 10% daily value of sodium per serving and no added phosphates (phos).



## Eat protein before and after every treatment

Power up for every treatment to replace the protein that can be lost during dialysis.



## Eat high-protein foods first

Fill up on high-protein foods first for each meal and snack. Great sources of protein include fresh meat (beef, pork, chicken and fish), eggs, tofu or beans.

## Delicious ideas for protein-packed meals and snacks:

- /// Put chicken, tuna or egg salad on high-protein bread, crackers or a lettuce salad.
- /// Mix fruit with Greek yogurt or cottage cheese.
- /// Spread peanut butter on high-protein bread, an apple or celery.
- /// Snack on a handful of unsalted almonds or peanuts, 1 ounce of natural cheese or hard-boiled eggs.



## Use your hand as a serving size guide

The palm of your hand is about 3–5 ounces or ½ cup of protein (1 serving). Your dietitian will determine how many ounces of protein you need each day.