

## Protein-enriched foods

- Older people should use protein-enriched food products to increase protein intake when appetite is poor or with a vegetarian diet.
- When advising to use non-familiar protein-enriched food products, such as protein powder, professionals need to give practical tips on how to use the product in the habitual diet (preparation method, using it in e.g. dairy products, desserts).

## Physical activity

- Older adults should be physically active for at least 30 minutes per day, as it benefits physical function and quality of life, and helps to prevent frailty and protein-energy malnutrition.
- The longer, the more frequent, and/or the more intensive older adults are physically active, the more their health will benefit.
- Older adults should engage in activities that strengthen the muscles and bones, for example resistance training.
- Sedentary behaviour should be reduced as much as possible, as this lowers the risk of functional decline and frailty.

## PROMISS background

With the European population growing older, the challenge is to keep an increasing number of seniors across all European countries healthy and active. Data from over 8,000 older adults from five different Western countries, show that almost 30% of older adults do not meet the current European Food Safety Authority's protein intake recommendation of 0.8g per kg body weight per day.

**PROMISS** aims to better understand and ultimately prevent protein energy malnutrition in seniors. Thereby, PROMISS will contribute to improve active and healthy ageing.

This leaflet covers several recommendations regarding protein intake and physical activity of **community-dwelling older adults**, largely based on **PROMISS** research.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, grant n° 678732.

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## Scientific Strategies



Prevention Of Malnutrition In Senior Subjects

## Increasing protein intake

## Optimal protein intake

All men and women aged 70 and older, irrespective of physical activity level, should:

- eat more than 1.0g of protein per kg adjusted body weight per day as it benefits physical function.
- consume at least 30g of protein in one meal per day and, if possible, in two meals per day.

## Screening and assessing for low protein intake

Professionals should:

- Use a validated protein screener to rapidly screen older adults for risk of low protein intake.
- Perform a thorough nutritional assessment to determine habitual protein intake before an individualized advice on increasing protein intake can be given.
- Use adjusted body weight (the body weight that would bring the person in the normal BMI range of 22-27 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) when calculating the recommended protein intake (g/d) for an older adult with a BMI < 22 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or > 27 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

- When protein intake is low and BMI is 22 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher, older adults should avoid increasing energy intake when increasing protein intake, in order to prevent weight gain.
- When protein intake is low and BMI is below 22 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, older people should increase protein intake as well as energy intake in order to gain weight.
- A dietician or nutritionist can help to increase protein intake by developing a healthy diet according to individual preferences.
- Practical tools that focus on food products (and not only on the nutrient protein) are helpful for older people. For example, a clear brochure with pictures of food products, information on protein content of these products, and examples of protein-rich meals or recipes.
- Professionals should encourage older people to regularly monitor their protein intake, for example by using a (digital) diary.
- Older people should increase their protein intake gradually and use products with a high protein density, and especially high protein drinks, to avoid feelings of fullness and bloating.

## A sustainable protein diet

- Older people should eat more plant-based protein such as legumes, cereals, nuts and seeds.
- It is not necessary to go completely vegan or vegetarian.
- Older people should eat less animal-based protein (such as beef, lamb, and processed meats) and choose chicken and pork – if meat is eaten.
- Fish should not be eaten more than once a week.
- If fish is eaten, eco-labels on certified fish products such as the blue Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo, and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) logo should be considered by older people.

