Many Americans search for the best way to improve their overall health, manage their weight and satisfy their appetites. One strategy for maintaining a healthy lifestyle may be as simple as re-thinking protein’s place on our plates.

**THE POWER OF PROTEIN AT EVERY MEAL**

Beef Up Your Meals with Protein at Every Meal

A growing body of evidence indicates that many people may benefit from eating more protein foods at every meal. Currently, the majority of protein is eaten at dinner (42%), followed by lunch (28%), and breakfast (16%).

Snacks, which may be spread throughout the day, make up the difference. A simple dietary change, increasing protein intake at each meal (rather than consuming the majority at one meal, like dinner), may help you meet your protein needs, improve satiety and preserve lean muscle mass.

Furthermore, consuming 20-30 grams of protein per meal may optimize skeletal muscle synthesis.

Incorporate Protein at Every Meal and Snack

Including protein foods at each meal can be achievable by planning ahead and understanding what food sources contain high-quality protein. Try out the following when preparing your protein-rich meals:

- **Beef Up Your Breakfast:** Kick off your morning with a Steak and Eggs Breakfast Taco or make Easy Mexican Beef Cornbread Muffins ahead of time for those extra busy mornings.

- **Load Up Your Lunch:** Add protein-rich options, like garbanzo beans, hard-boiled eggs, unsalted nuts and lean beef, to your greens to create salads that pack plenty of protein.

- **Sneak in a Snack:** Munch on grab-and-go snacks that contain high-quality protein, like beef jerky and reduced-fat string cheese.

- **Dress Up Your Dinner:** Whip up an easy, homemade beef pasta sauce with noodles and pair it with a vegetable-inspired side, like steamed broccoli or a green salad.

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Steak and Eggs Breakfast Taco

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients
1. beef Top Sirloin Steak Boneless, cut ¼ inch thick (about 12 ounces)
2. teaspoons vegetable oil
6. small flour tortillas (6-inch diameter), warmed
6. eggs, beaten or 1½ cups egg substitute
6. tablespoons reduced-fat shredded Cheddar cheese
6. tablespoons guacamole
6. tablespoons salsa
6. tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream

Instructions
1. Heat large, heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Season beef steak with salt, as desired. Place beef in skillet. Pan-broil 10 to 13 minutes for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally. Remove beef from skillet. Set aside; keep warm.
2. Heat oil in same skillet over medium heat until hot. Add eggs and scramble until set, stirring occasionally; keep warm.
3. Carve steak into thin slices. Top each tortilla with equal amounts of eggs and steak, and 1 tablespoon each of cheese, guacamole, salsa and sour cream. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving, using eggs:
313 calories; 15 g fat (5 g saturated fat; 6 g monounsaturated fat); 231 mg cholesterol; 504 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 17 g fiber; 25 g protein; 4.8 mg niacin; 0.4 mg vitamin B₆; 1.2 mcg vitamin B₁₂; 2.8 mg iron; 18.7 mcg selenium; 3.5 mg zinc; 183.2 mg choline.

Nutrition information per serving, using egg substitute:
271 calories; 10 g fat (4 g saturated fat; 4 g monounsaturated fat); 45 mg cholesterol; 553 mg sodium; 20 g carbohydrate; 17 g fiber; 24 g protein; 4.9 mg niacin; 0.4 mg vitamin B₆; 1.0 mcg vitamin B₁₂; 31 mg iron; 48.2 mcg selenium; 3.4 mg zinc; 136 mg choline.

Easy Mexican Beef Cornbread Muffins

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients
1. recipe Mexican-Style Beef Breakfast Sausage
1. package (8-1/2 ounces) cornbread muffin mix
1. large egg
1/2 cup low-fat or skim milk
1/2 cup shredded Mexican cheese blend

Instructions
1. Prepare Mexican-Style Beef Sausage (see below). Remove from pan.
   Mexican-Style Beef Sausage:
   1 pound Ground Beef
   2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
   1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano leaves
   1 1/2 teaspoons smoked paprika
   1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
   1 teaspoon garlic powder
   2 teaspoons salt
   2 teaspoons chipotle chili powder
   • Combine ingredients in large mixing bowl mixing lightly but thoroughly.
   • Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot.
   • Add sausage mixture
   • Cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking into ½-inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare muffin batter according to package directions with egg and milk. Fold sausage into muffin batter.
4. Divide muffin batter evenly among 24 mini muffin cups, filling cup to top. Top batter evenly with cheese. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until muffins are cooked through and cheese is melted and golden brown.

Nutrition information per serving:
254 calories; 10 g fat (4 g saturated fat; 4 g monounsaturated fat); 73 mg cholesterol; 490 mg sodium; 22 g carbohydrate; 2.2 g fiber; 18 g protein; 4.2 mg niacin; 0.3 mg vitamin B₆; 1.6 mcg vitamin B₁₂; 2.5 mg iron; 15.5 mcg selenium; 3.7 mg zinc; 23.6 mg choline.