

NUTRITION INSIGHT

Power Up with Plant Protein

By Emilie Riddle, UVM M.S. Dietetics Intern

Getting some protein with every meal provides fuel for your active student lifestyle, helps maintain strong muscles, and keeps you feeling satisfied until your next meal. Even if you are not following a vegetarian or vegan eating pattern, plant proteins are a way to add variety and help you stay fit and healthy.

In addition to amino acids (the building blocks of body proteins), plant proteins provide fiber and nutrients like calcium, potassium, magnesium and B vitamins, while being naturally low in cholesterol, sodium, and calories. Research shows a strong link between eating patterns based on plant proteins and a reduced risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Choosing plant proteins also helps the environment. Beef is the worst offender: if cows started their own country they would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter, behind the U.S. and China! Cutting your consumption of meat, dairy, and eggs in half can reduce your environmental footprint by half.

Plant proteins include soy, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and some grains. Nutritional yeast and spirulina are also good sources of protein. There are many plant proteins available at UVM Dining locations, including tofu, seitan, beans, seeds, peanut butter, hummus, falafel, tempeh, lentils, and quinoa.

Easy Protein Snacks

Try these simple snacks to add plant proteins to your eating pattern. Most of them are also great options to have on the go between classes and study sessions:

- Nuts, pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- Roasted chickpeas or edamame
- Trail Mix – make your own with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, dark chocolate
- Apple, pear, carrots, or celery with peanut or other nut butter
- Bean Salsa – mix beans with salsa and serve with tortilla chips
- Toast with hummus or nut butter – try sprouted bread for extra protein

Microwave Popcorn with Nutritional Yeast

Cheaper than buying microwave popcorn bags, nutritional yeast gives a “cheesy” flavor with a healthy dose of protein—2-6 grams per tablespoon!

1/4 cup popping corn

1-2 tablespoons nutritional yeast, to taste

Salt, to taste

Brown paper lunch bag

Place 1/4 cup popcorn kernels in bag (no staples or other metal in it). Fold the bag over a few times and place in the microwave. Microwave on high for about 2-3 minutes, until popping slows to every couple of seconds. Stop promptly to make sure it doesn't burn! Pour into a bowl and sprinkle with salt and nutritional yeast.

Upcoming Events:

- Nov 9 - Smoothie Bowls: MyKitchen @ Harris Millis; 5-6:30P
- Nov 15 - Portion Distortion Game @ Central Dining; 12:00-2P
- Nov 28 - Healthy Holiday Eats @ The Marketplace; 11:30A-1:30P
- Dec 11 - Avocado Toast @ University Marche; 5-6:30P



Along with protein, nuts are packed with heart healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Try a handful today!



Do you have food allergies? Questions about nutrition or dining on campus? Contact our Dietitian today!

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UVM DINING