Tips to Help You Make Wise Choices from the Protein Foods Group

Go Lean with Protein:

- **Start with a lean choice:**
  - The leanest beef cuts include round steaks and roasts (eye of round, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
  - The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, and ham.
  - Choose extra lean ground beef. The label should say at least “90% lean.”
  - Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
  - Choose lean turkey, roast beef, ham, or low-fat luncheon meats for sandwiches instead of luncheon/deli meats with more fat, such as regular bologna or salami.

- **Keep it lean:**
  - Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.
  - Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying.
  - Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
  - Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish. Breading adds calories. It will also cause the food to soak up more fat during frying.

Vary Your Protein Choices:

- **Choose seafood at least twice a week as the main protein food.** Look for seafood rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring. Some ideas are:
  - Salmon steak or filet
  - Salmon loaf
  - Grilled or baked trout

- **Choose beans, peas, or soy products as a main dish or part of a meal often.** Some choices are:
  - Chili with kidney or pinto beans
  - Stir-fried tofu
  - Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups
  - Baked beans
  - Black bean enchiladas
  - Garbanzo or kidney beans on a chef’s salad
  - Rice and beans
  - Veggie burgers
  - Hummus (chickpeas) spread on pita bread

- **Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes.** Use nuts to replace meat or poultry, not in addition to these items:
  - Use pine nuts in pesto sauce for pasta.
  - Add slivered almonds to steamed vegetables.
  - Add toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir fry instead of meat.
  - Sprinkle a few nuts on top of low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt.
  - Add walnuts or pecans to a green salad instead of cheese or meat.

Source: [http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/protein-foods-tips.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/protein-foods-tips.html)
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