

# Protein Foods for Young Children

Children need protein to grow properly, build muscle, and stay healthy. Protein provides essential vitamins and minerals needed for strong bones and a healthy immune system. Eating protein rich foods also helps children feel full after eating.

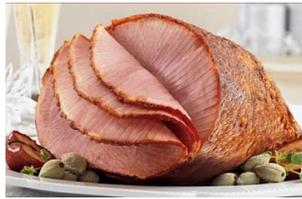
## Protein Requirements

A child's protein needs depend on his or her age and weight. Preschoolers need between 13 to 19 grams of protein daily, which is about 2 to 3 ounce portions of meat or beans.

A one ounce portion is one ounce of meat, fish, or poultry;  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cooked dry beans; 1 egg; 1 tablespoon of peanut butter; or  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of nuts.

## Protein Rich Foods

- Lean beef, pork, ham
- Chicken, turkey
- Fish, seafood
- Eggs
- Milk, cheese, yogurt
- Peanut butter, nuts, seeds
- Dry beans and peas
- Soy foods, such as tofu



## Easy Ways to Add Protein Foods

- Try canned tuna or salmon in sandwiches or casseroles.
- Experiment with different grilled or baked fish, such as tilapia, cod or haddock.
- Choose lean ground beef to make sloppy joes and serve on whole wheat buns.
- Prepare eggs in different ways, such as scrambled eggs with cheese, hard-boiled egg slices, or egg salad made with chopped celery and low-fat mayonnaise.
- Heat canned lentil soup for a noontime meal and serve with whole wheat bread or crackers.



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# Recipe Corner



Your child will have fun making these baked meatballs with you. Ask for help in measuring the breadcrumbs and shaping the meatballs. Involving your child peaks his or her interest in trying different foods.

## Baked Meatballs

**SOURCE:** What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

Prep time: 25 min

Makes: 8 servings (of 3 meatballs)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground beef, 90% lean (or ground turkey)**
- 1 egg**
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley**
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs**
- 1/2 cup milk, 1% (or non-fat)**
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon onion powder**



### PREPARATION:

- 1. Mix all ingredients, shape into balls (about 24 meatballs)**
- 2. Arrange on baking sheets that have been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.**
- 3. Bake at 425°F for 12 -15 minutes. It is best to use a food safety thermometer to check for doneness (it should read 160°F for ground beef and 165°F for ground turkey).**
- 4. If meatballs are being saved for future use, chill rapidly; package in amounts needed per meal and freeze immediately.**



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