



**KINDERGARTEN**  
**LESSON: Protein**  
**SC STANDARD: Literacy Standards**

## PROTEIN

### OBJECTIVES:

- Understand where to find protein on a food label
- Understand that protein is made up of amino acids and is an important building block in the body
- Understand how much protein is needed in a day and how to use a food label to add protein content

### LET'S GET STARTED:

- Review protein from MyPlate
- Explain why protein is an important part of diet
- Explain how protein is made up of amino acids and how it helps the body function
- Discuss the recommended daily protein intake and how to use a food label to help calculate it

### STORY:

- Read the story about Boss learning about protein

### WRAPPING UP:

- Remind students about the necessary daily protein and to use food labels to make sure they are getting enough protein

## LET'S GET STARTED!

- This week we are going to talk about protein! Ask students if they remember where to find protein on a food label. Ask students what they remember about protein from the MyPlate Protein lesson. Explain that proteins are the building blocks of life.

### DIALOGUE BOX

- Today we are talking about protein! Does anyone remember where you can find protein on a food label?
- Food labels tell you how much protein is in one serving of that food.
- Remember that protein is a part of the MyPlate food groups that you should eat every day. What are some foods that have lots of protein?
  - Meat, fish, beans, nuts, eggs, dairy.
- Does anyone remember why protein is an important part of a healthy diet?
  - Protein gives you energy and builds strong bones and muscles.
- Proteins are the building blocks of life. There are thousands of different proteins in your body that help make up your muscles, organs, and immune system! There are so many proteins in your body that do specific jobs they do in order to keep you healthy. The protein in the food you eat helps build and maintain the proteins in your body.
- Proteins are made up of smaller nutrients called amino acids. Think of a string with lots of beads on it. Each bead is an amino acid, and when you combine them on the string you have a protein.
- The protein you eat is broken down into amino acids in your stomach. Your body is able to use those amino acids to build and repair its own proteins, helping you build muscles and grow strong.
- Discuss the protein content of different foods. Talk about high protein foods and low protein foods. Explain how much protein is recommended daily and how to use a food label to make sure you consume enough protein.

### DIALOGUE BOX

- When you look at a food label, you can see how much protein that food has. Most food has protein in it, but some foods have a lot of protein, like meat, beans, nuts, and fish, and other foods have very little protein, like fruits, vegetables, rice, and processed foods like chips and cookies.
- Your body needs about 35 grams of protein every day so that it can function properly. Your body is constantly using protein to carry out certain tasks!
- The food label is a great way to make sure you are getting enough protein. By checking the protein content of the foods you eat, you can see if they add up to 35 grams by the end of the day!
- For example, if the cereal you eat for breakfast has 2 grams of protein and the milk you put in it has 8 grams of protein, you already have 10 grams of protein for the day!
- Food labels are a great way to track your protein to make sure you are getting enough throughout the day!



## STORY

- Read story about Boss and his buddies learning about protein, and how they can get big and strong by eating it more

## WRAPPING UP

- Ask students if there are any questions about protein

His friend Sally then went on to explain more about protein and the foods that it is not found in. She said, "Some foods do not have protein at all in them, like fruits for example. Just because fruits do not have protein does not mean they are bad for you! Fruits have all kinds of other nutrients other than protein that you need in your diet! Other foods that do not have protein are things like chips. This is a little different from the apple because chips have a lot of things that are not that healthy for you in them, like fat and salt. Other foods that have protein other than meat, nuts, and beans are leafy green vegetables! Leafy green vegetables are the ones that are dark green and full of nutrients! An example of this would be kale! Although kale is a vegetable, it does have some protein in it! See, protein can come in many different forms and varieties of foods!" Boss thought that was so cool and that night asked his mom for fish and a salad for dinner.

### Boss Learns about Protein

One afternoon after soccer practice, Boss and his buddies all sat down together at the picnic tables waiting on their parents to pick them up. They were talking about soccer and their upcoming game when one of Boss friends said, "I can't wait to be big and strong! I'll be able to run faster and kick the ball harder when I get stronger!" Boss said, "Yeah me too! I want to be big and strong like our coach! I wonder how he did it?" Jake entered into the conversation by saying, "Coach eats a lot of healthy foods that have a lot of protein in it!" Boss asked, "What Is protein? And how do you find it in your food?" Jake replied, "Protein is in foods like meat, beans, peanut butter, and nuts. The big source of protein is meat though. Meat can come in many different types, such as fish, pork, beef, chicken, etc." After explaining where protein comes from, Boss asked, "How does protein make you big and strong? And what all does it do for your body?" Jake said, "Protein helps build muscle, which is what makes you big and strong! Protein also helps keep the cells and tissues in your body healthy so that they can function properly! Without protein, you would probably feel weak and tired, and not have much energy to do the things you like to do during the day!"

