

What to eat while taking a GLP-1: High protein Greek bean salad

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Featured topic and speakers

Wondering what you should you eat while taking a GLP-1 medication? If you're taking a GLP-1 medication, your nutrition choices matter more than ever—and eating less doesn't have to mean eating worse. Nate Wood, MD, MHS, walks through a simple, delicious big Greek bean salad that delivers the nutrients many people need to prioritize while taking GLP-1 medications: protein, fiber and balanced macronutrients. This easy recipe proves that healthy eating can be both satisfying and full of flavor.

- Protein-rich
- Fiber-packed
- GLP-1-friendly
- Fresh and flavorful

Watch along and learn how to make this nutritious meal at home.

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Speakers

- **Nate Wood, MD, MHS**, obesity medicine physician, internal medicine; director, culinary medicine, Yale University School of Medicine

Transcript

Dr. Wood: When we're taking a GLP-1, that means we're eating less. But eating less doesn't have to mean eating worse. So there's a few tenets we really want to follow, which we're going to get to with this delicious recipe here. But it comes down to making sure we're getting enough protein, enough fiber, enough micronutrients and managing some of those side effects that we can sometimes see with the GLP-1 medication.

So let's dig in here. Today we're going to be making a Greek bean salad. Super delicious. Let's start with the powerhouse of the recipe here, which is these beans. So we have some garbanzo beans and some cannellini beans here. Absolutely delicious. But what they're really doing for us is bringing a combination of both fiber and protein.

Now, the reason that protein is so important is that when we're losing weight, we're not just losing fat, although, wouldn't that be great? We're also losing muscle. So we want to really minimize the amount of muscle that we're losing and maximize, really, the amount of fat that we're losing. The way we can do that is twofold. We can lift some weights. That's super important. Don't forget it. But we can also be sure to eat enough protein so that we can support muscle growth and muscle maintenance while we're on a GLP-1 medication.

Now, the other thing that's really important is fiber. So fiber is important for everyone, and 95% of Americans don't get enough fiber. I'm probably one of them. But the reason that fiber is so important is, it's not only good for our gut health, but it's also good for digestion. So where do we get fiber? Fiber comes from plants. Different color plants have different nutrients. And so another key thing to consider when we're on a GLP-1 is that if we're not eating much, if we're not careful, we might not be getting the vitamins and minerals that our body needs. So really focusing on getting a variety of plants, again, for that fiber, but especially for those micronutrients, different vitamins and minerals and things that support our immune system.

We have fiber, we have protein, both really, really important when we're on a GLP-1. And then the other thing to consider besides those micronutrients is really focusing on managing side effects. Some people might have a little bit of reflux, a little bit of acid reflux when we're taking a GLP-1 medication. They're going to have to figure out what their triggers are. Maybe it's garlic. Maybe it's spicy foods. Maybe it's tomato. Some other common side effects include nausea. I would say, if that's you, definitely talk to your doctor. They can help you with that.

But a way to prevent that is you can eat smaller meals throughout the day. So instead of eating a couple of big, greasy meals at the beginning of the day, you can wake up, have a nice, small breakfast, and then continue eating small meals every three or four hours throughout the day. And that will really not overwhelm your stomach, and you won't experience that nausea as much.

And then something we haven't yet talked about is calcium. In addition to losing fat, which we want, and muscle, which we don't want to lose, we're also losing a little bit of bone, believe it or not. So our bones get a little bit thinner when we take a GLP-1 medication. And that's because when we're losing weight, our bones undergo a little less stress. Their life gets easier, because they're carrying around less weight.

And so one way that you can keep those bones nice and strong is by continuing to stress them, by lifting weights, by doing push-ups. And then the other thing that we can do is by eating dairy. So I'm going to throw in a little bit of feta here. You know what? let's throw in all the feta. I really like feta. I'm going to do some herbs. You could certainly use dried herbs here. But I would say as a chef, that using fresh herbs really amps up the flavor of the dish.

Look how easy that is. Delicious. That's more or less everything we want in our delicious salad here, so now we're just going to dress it. Making dressings at home, super easy. Doesn't have to be complicated. You, of course, could buy it. There's nothing wrong with that. Let's dress our salad. Let's start with that and see how it looks. This salad already has lots of protein because of the beans. But hey, if you want a little bit more, pairing it with salmon, tofu, this nice chicken here, that would be a really nice accompaniment to this already protein-rich salad.

And really, I think when people are on a GLP-1, they think about restricting their diet. They're like, I'm trying to lose weight, I have to eat less. It's really not about that. Let the medicine do its job. It's going to work on your appetite. It's going to slow digestion. They're really effective medications. The only thing you need to focus on is eating a variety of really delicious, health-promoting foods. And really, that combination of the medicine with this fiber, this protein, these delicious micronutrients, that's really going to be all you need to focus on.

I don't know if you can see that, but that looks so good. I'm going to get myself some of this. We'll make sure to get you the recipe so that you can make this at home.

Disclaimer: This video is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. If you have questions about your health and diet, please consult your doctor.