

# How to track your Phe intake

It is important to do all you can to protect your brain from the toxic effects of high or unstable phenylalanine (Phe). Tracking your Phe intake is a key part of managing **your** PKU every day. There are a few different ways to track your Phe intake.

Always work with your dietitian to find the way that works best for **you**.

## Counting milligrams (mg) of Phe

You can easily track your Phe intake by using a PKU food reference guide. This will tell you how much Phe is contained in common foods.

If you do not have a PKU food reference list handy, you can use this calculation to estimate the amount of Phe in a food or beverage:

**1 g Protein = 50 mg Phe (approximately)**

Use the protein amount and serving size listed on the food or drink label to convert grams of protein into milligrams of Phe. For example, this label states that the food contains 2 g of protein per serving.

**2 g Protein x 50 = 100 mg Phe**

**Be careful.** The actual Phe content can vary between brands of food, so it is important to always refer to an approved PKU food reference guide or check with your dietitian.

It is also important to select one PKU food reference guide and stick with it. Do not use multiple sources to calculate your daily intake.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 28g (About 21 pieces)	
Servings Per Container About 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 170	Calories from Fat 110
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% Daily Value	
Total Fat 11g	17%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 250mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	2%
Sugars 0g	
<b>Protein 2g</b>	
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Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 4%
Vitamin E 6%	Thiamin 4%
Riboflavin 2%	Niacin 4%
Vitamin B 2%	Phosphorus 2%

## Counting exchanges of Phe

Tracking Phe intake by counting exchanges is another way to monitor your intake. With this method, the amount of Phe you are allowed each day is allocated in units called "exchanges". Your dietitian will advise you of the number of exchanges you are allowed each day.

**1 g Protein = 50 mg Phe (approximately) = 1 Exchange**

Counting exchanges may be simpler than counting milligrams for some people. For example, if you are prescribed 300 mg Phe per day, instead of counting to 300 mg you just have to count to 6 exchanges. Most PKU food reference guides include exchange values. It is important to always use the same PKU food reference guide as Phe exchange values can vary between guides. Always check with your dietitian if you have questions.

Foods with the same exchange value contain the same amount of Phe and can be swapped, e.g.



80 g boiled or  
mashed potato



45 g chips



15 g cornflakes



20 g baked beans

## Counting grams (g) of protein

The total protein content for packaged foods and beverages is always included on the food label and is based on the serving size. This method is not the most accurate way to track your daily Phe intake; however, it may be easier to do when counting milligrams is too difficult.

If an item's food label says:

- 0 g of protein, it can still contain up to 0.5 g per 100 g or 100 ml
- 1 g of protein, it can contain anywhere from 0.50 to 1.49 g per serving

It is important to always double check information found on a food label against an approved PKU food reference guide or with your dietitian. Pay attention to the serving sizes as these can vary between the same type of foods.

## How to track **your** Phe intake

Once you and your dietitian have determined which method will work best for you to track your daily Phe intake, it's important to find a way to work it into your daily life.

My method for tracking Phe/Protein is: \_\_\_\_\_

My daily Phe/Protein intake prescription is: \_\_\_\_\_

## Tips for tracking **your** Phe

### ✓ Keep it simple!

Use a notebook or smartphone application to record your food and beverages.

### ✓ Know your foods

Becoming familiar with the Phe contained in the foods you commonly eat can make tracking easier.

### ✓ Make it routine

Be consistent about when and how you track your dietary intake so that it becomes a part of your daily routine.

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