Leyla Weighs In: Balancing Budget and Nutrition

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | October 30, 2026



Meeting Senior Protein Needs on a Budget and the Role of Butyrate: Nutritionist Leyla Muedin addresses a listener struggling to reach the suggested 20–30 grams of protein per meal on a fixed income, explaining updated guidance of roughly 1–1.2 g/kg/day and offering a simple estimate that 1 ounce of animal protein provides about 6–7 grams. She advises not to force-feed, to be guided by hunger over the week, and to prioritize complete animal proteins over filling up on bread, rice, and beans, especially for seniors concerned about blood sugar. To reduce costs, she recommends shopping at discount stores (e.g., Dollar General, Aldi/Lidl) for eggs, canned fish, bacon, and fatty ground beef, noting non-organic options are preferable to high-starch processed foods. She then discusses short-chain fatty acids (acetate, propionate, butyrate), emphasizing butyrate’s importance for colon energy, barrier integrity, and inflammation, noting it can come from gut fermentation, butter/ghee, and ketosis via beta-hydroxybutyrate.