

Why Whey More

“If everyone were raised on whey, doctors would be bankrupt.”

An old Florentine proverb

Whey has been eaten in some cultures for centuries, even being mentioned in the ‘Little Miss Muppet’ nursery rhyme. A nutritional powerhouse, it normally comes from cow milk and is a byproduct of the cheese making industry.

Whey protein powders are a great way to boost protein in your diet. A single serving can provide as much protein as a half-pound of chicken breast. Many studies have been done over the last 15 years by a wide variety of scientific bodies around the world to determine the health benefits of whey. It has been proven to help immune system function and decrease risks from certain cancers.

Whey protein concentrates contain more fat and lactose than isolates and hydrolysates, and contain 70-85% protein. The downside to the concentrates is that lactose intolerant folks may get gassy or bloated using them. The main upside is the cost compared to the other whey proteins and the higher number of bioactive compounds. Concentrates have a biological value (BV) of 104, which is a rating for how they are absorbed and used by the body. Eggs, by comparison, used to have the highest BV rating at 100.

Isolates are far purer protein, 90-96% protein, with a BV rating of 159, meaning that it is absorbed and used by the body quickly and easily. The isolates contain little or no lactose and have lost nearly all of the milk components, making them great for lactose intolerant folks. They have less fat, less cholesterol (or none), and cost a bit more. They are still great for your immune system, too.

Whey protein hydrolysates are the most refined and expensive of the whey isolates. They are extremely bitter and are mixed with other fluids to be drinkable. They are essentially whey protein that has been predigested to break peptides into shorter amino acid chains for easier absorption. This is probably the fastest protein a body can absorb, though I was unable to find a Biological Value for it, since hydrolysates are never taken alone.

It’s easy to mix a little whey into water or milk and slam it down, followed by eating a piece of fruit, a salad, or some other carbohydrate when you’re in a hurry. It’s tastier mixed into a smoothie with fruit and/or vegetables, such as bananas, frozen berries, spinach, and apples.