

*We present here the findings of a through search through the research literature in answer to one of the most common questions we're asked: **Isn't high protein bad for my health?***

According to a growing number of studies the answer is a clear 'no.' However many people maintain the opposite perception; that excess protein will impair kidney function, cause a toxic buildup in the body, lead to increased risk of heart attack, stroke, and death.

HOW DID THIS PERCEPTION HAPPEN?

The American Heart Association (AHA) Nutrition Committee published a statement in 2001 regarding protein intake: "*Individuals who follow these [high-protein] diets are risk for ... potential cardiac, renal, bone, and liver abnormalities overall.*" When an organization like the AHA makes such a claim it can have a profound impact on the public's perception. Most people will not question such a proclamation; they will not investigate the research and find out that there simply are NO credible studies that indicate that an otherwise healthy person would be harmed by eating a high protein diet.

Another factor influencing the public's opinion are studies that do find links between protein intake and health issues. One such study is the Nurses' Health Study. This 11-year study of 1624 women concluded that the high protein intake of women diagnosed with mild kidney insufficiency may have had a detrimental affect on kidney function and *recommended larger, longer studies to further evaluate this finding.*

The National Academy of Sciences reported that *the only known danger from high-protein diets is for individuals with kidney disease.* Although these studies clearly found no danger to people with normal kidney function they may have contributed to a misconception that high protein intake is inherently harmful.

PROTEIN IS NOT REALLY SO BAD AFTER ALL.....

The Journal of the American College of Nutrition published a review on the works of Thomas L. Halton and Frank B. Hu, MD, Ph.D , which concluded that higher levels of protein were beneficial to improved blood lipids, lowered blood pressure, and noted a reduced risk of heart disease. Other studies have found that high protein intake can have a thermogenic effect on the metabolism; meaning the assimilation of protein can 'heat up' the metabolism causing more calories to be consumed by the body even when at rest.

In comparing multiple studies that span across decades the message is clear; high protein diets can be far more beneficial than detrimental to one's health.

Key factors that determine the outcome of a high protein diet include the type of protein consumed and the frequency of consumption. To state it simply: *Eat plenty of protein, and eat it often.*

author: Genesis Transformation

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