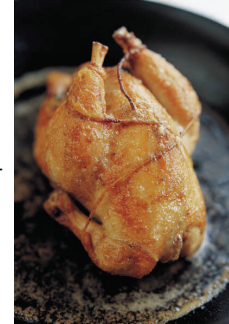


Protein: Are We Getting Enough?

Many of the old timers back in the “carbo-loading” days would probably say yes to this question: Are we eating enough protein? However, studies are proving everyday that Americans are protein deficient and are way too “carbed up.” Many people believe that the body can only digest so many grams of protein per meal and that too much can be dangerous to your liver and kidneys. According to Dr. A. Scott Connelly, M.D., of Met-Rx Engineered Nutrition, “the idea that it is dangerous to consume too much protein over time is unfortunately one of the most pervasive myths remaining today.” (1) Of course, too much of anything can be harmful. Too much sugar, fat, and alcohol are dangerous to your health and people still overdose on these everyday- knowing there are studies that have proven over and over the results.



“At conservative Tufts University, Dr. William Evans and colleagues, at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center, have shown that men who regularly exercise with the endurance sports of running, cycling, or swimming require more protein than the RDA.” (2). For serious weight training individuals and athletes who incorporate a large amount of aerobic exercise into their daily routine, protein quantities are very important. The amount of protein needed is higher due to a large amount of amino acids being burned during cardiovascular workouts. This usually occurs after all carbohydrates have been used up. Most athletes and serious weight trainers have lowered their carbohydrates to obtain a leaner, more muscular body. Remember, constant fluid intake is very important to your body no matter what your intake is of carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

According to the book Protein Power, by Michael and Mary Ann Eades, M.D., a person needs to consider how much LBM (lean body mass- see bottom of page for formula) one has and how active one is to determine the amount of protein needed to maintain their current physique.

Here are the guidelines specified in the book Protein Power:

1. Sedentary - no physical activity - 0.5 grams of protein per pound of lean body mass is needed.
2. Moderately Active - exercise 20-30 minute, 3 times per week- 0.6 grams of protein per pound of lean body mass is needed.
3. Active - exercise more than 30 minutes, 3-5 times per week- 0.7 grams of protein per pound of lean body mass is needed.
4. Very Active - vigorous physical activity lasting an hour or more five or more times per week- 0.8 gram of protein per pound of lean body mass is needed.
5. Athlete- competitive athlete in training, performing twice-daily heavy physical workouts for an hour or more- 0.9 grams of lean body mass per pound of lean body mass is needed.

Here is an example using the above numbers: Active individual with a LBM of 120:

$$120 \times 0.7 = 84 \text{ grams of protein needed per day.}$$

* information taken from the book Protein Power, Drs. Michael and Mary Ann Eades, New York, New York, 1996.

Please remember that the activity described above is exercise that is consistent for the time listed. Running up and down the stairs to answer your phone or to put away laundry is not considered aerobic exercise.

Here is the formula for determining your LBM (lean body mass):

$$\begin{array}{rclcl} \text{Your weight} & \times & \text{current body fat percentage} & = & \text{pounds of fat on your body} \\ 124 & \times & 15\% (.15) & = & 18.75 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rclcl} \text{Your weight} & - & \text{your pounds of body fat} & = & \text{LBM} \\ 124 & - & 18.75 & = & 105 \text{ LBM} \end{array}$$

As you can see, determining how much protein is enough is a very difficult question to answer unless you know all the details about yourself. However, it is very important to follow the steps so that you can obtain the body and the lifestyle you deserve.

(1) Met-Rx engineered Nutrition Owner's Manual 201- pg. 27, Met-Rx USA. 1996.
(2) Colgan, Dr. Michael , Optimum Sports Nutrition, Ronkonkoma, NY, 1993.