# Experts warn that excessive protein intake may accelerate ageing and increase disease risk



In recent years, the health and wellness landscape has seen a surge in trends promoting high protein consumption. From trendy snacks like protein-enriched popcorn and ice cream to the popularity of protein supplements, it's clear that protein has become the focal point of many dietary regimens. However, experts are raising concerns about the potential drawbacks of excessive protein intake, particularly from animal sources.

Melanie Murphy Richter, a holistic dietitian with a focus on longevity, highlights how our current wellness culture has caused an overemphasis on protein, noting that some adults consume as much as one gram of protein per pound of body weight. This level of intake can often be three times higher than the body’s actual requirements, leading to unintended health consequences. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2020-2025) indicate that many men aged 19 to 59 routinely exceed the recommended protein consumption, which is concerning given the emerging science around the detrimental effects of such excess.

Overconsumption of protein, particularly from animal products, has been linked to an increased activation of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), a key nutrient-sensing pathway in the body. While beneficial during growth periods such as childhood and adolescence, maintaining high levels of IGF-1 into adulthood—especially between the ages of 18 and 65—has been shown to accelerate biological aging. Dr. Joseph Antoun, a physician and longevity expert, further explains that an abundance of IGF-1 can lead to various health issues, including Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. This rise in health risks is attributed to a shift in cellular processes that favour growth over repair.

Understanding the delicate balance of protein intake is paramount, especially as both excessive and insufficient protein consumption pose risks. Dr. Antoun provides a guideline advocating for between 0.31 to 0.36 grams of plant-based protein per pound of body weight for those under 65, while advising those over 65 to slightly increase their protein intake to counteract muscle loss. This tailored approach reflects the variable nutritional needs based on age and individual health conditions.

The signs of consuming too much protein can manifest in various ways, ranging from digestive discomfort and dehydration to mood shifts and fatigue. More severe consequences include increased risks of coronary heart disease and certain cancers. Therefore, being aware of one’s symptoms can be critical. Those suspecting excessive protein intake are encouraged to consult healthcare professionals for personalised assessments and recommendations, especially as some individuals may experience serious repercussions like kidney and liver complications.

Ultimately, the key to a healthy diet lies in moderation and balance. Rather than diving headfirst into the protein craze, individuals are urged to seek a well-rounded nutritional approach that accommodates a diverse range of food groups. Should the task feel overwhelming, particularly when trying to avoid disordered eating habits or manage time constraints, working with a knowledgeable dietitian could simplify the process and enhance overall well-being.

In conclusion, while protein is an essential component of a balanced diet, moderation is crucial. Too much protein can lead not only to immediate discomfort but also to long-term health issues. By finding a personalised balance tailored to one’s individual health and lifestyle, one can support their longevity and healthspan effectively.

### Reference Map

1. All paragraphs were informed by the lead article.
2. Paragraph 3 integrated insights regarding health risks associated with excessive protein.
3. Paragraph 4 discussed the signs of excessive and insufficient protein.
4. Paragraph 5 explored balanced protein consumption and the role of dietitians.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.aol.com/1-common-health-habit-may-212500462.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ndtv.com/health/why-you-should-avoid-protein-overconsumption-8059296> - This article discusses the health risks associated with excessive protein intake, including kidney strain, liver overload, increased risk of heart disease, nutrient deficiencies, dehydration, weight gain, digestive issues, increased risk of osteoporosis, and bad breath. It emphasizes the importance of balanced protein consumption and suggests consulting a specialist for personalized advice.
3. <https://continentalhospitals.com/blog/is-too-much-protein-harmful-4-side-effects-you-should-know/> - The article outlines four side effects of excessive protein consumption: digestive issues, dehydration, nutrient imbalance, and weight gain. It advises individuals to consult with a healthcare provider or nutritionist before making significant changes to their protein intake and to ensure a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods to meet all nutritional needs.
4. <https://doctor.ndtv.com/nutrition/is-too-much-protein-bad-for-you-5181408> - This piece highlights the potential harms of excessive protein intake, such as kidney damage, digestive issues, nutrient imbalance, dehydration, bone health issues, heart disease risk, weight gain, liver issues, nutrient deficiency, and potential allergies and sensitivities. It recommends maintaining a balanced diet and consulting a healthcare professional before making significant dietary changes.
5. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/signs-of-too-much-protein-8553501> - The article identifies six signs of excessive protein intake: 'keto' breath, dehydration, weight gain, gastrointestinal discomfort, heart disease, and kidney and liver trouble. It advises individuals to monitor their protein consumption and consult with a healthcare provider if they experience these symptoms.
6. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/can-you-eat-too-much-protein> - This article discusses the potential risks of consuming too much protein, including digestive problems, extra calories leading to weight gain, foamy urine indicating kidney issues, and kidney damage. It advises individuals to be mindful of their protein intake and consult with a healthcare provider if they have concerns.
7. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/nutrition/when-it-comes-to-protein-how-much-is-too-much> - The article addresses the potential harms of excessive protein intake, such as increased risk of kidney stones, heart disease, and colon cancer. It provides guidance on appropriate protein consumption and recommends consulting with a doctor before making significant dietary changes.