

What diseases can you get if you eat too much protein?

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Summary of main content

1. Consuming a lot of protein is not always a healthy choice.
2. Too much protein can increase your risk of serious health problems and lead to nutrient deficiencies.
3. Keep your protein intake at about 10 to 35% of your daily calories to avoid overeating.

It can overwhelm other nutrient-rich foods.

If you've been on a very high-protein diet, you may be overlooking other nutrient-dense superstars that deserve a spot on your plate.

A diet that's too high in protein can crowd out other important foods—like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains—leaving you short on fiber, antioxidants, and essential vitamins and minerals. Over time, this can lead to nutrient deficiencies, a compromised immune system, and digestive issues. Instead, keep things balanced, including protein at every meal but also making room on your plate for colorful produce and plant-based foods.



Can lead to an imbalance in gut health

Protein-rich foods, especially animal-based options like fish, chicken or eggs, are great sources of protein, but they lack fiber – which can be detrimental to gut health. High-protein diets that focus on animal proteins can lead to fewer beneficial bacteria and more harmful bacteria. Fiber is an important nutrient that helps support a healthy and regular digestive tract, helping to prevent constipation and promote a thriving gut microbiome.

Think of your gut as a lawn—it looks best when it's lush, diverse, and well-manicured. Just as a lawn needs a mix of plants to thrive, your gut thrives on a variety of plant foods. Research suggests that one way to keep your gut microbiome thriving is to eat a variety of plant foods each week.

If you include plenty of fiber-rich plant-based protein sources like beans and lentils in your weekly diet, you won't experience any imbalances when it comes to gut health.

May increase stress and risk to kidneys

Although we can't see our bean-shaped organs located near our lower backs, our kidneys filter our blood and remove waste from our bodies. However, studies show that consuming large amounts of protein, especially over long periods of time, can put stress on the kidneys, forcing them to work too hard and potentially increasing their risk of damage.

High intakes of animal protein may also increase the risk of developing kidney stones. Animal protein increases the amount of acid in the urine, which can increase the risk of kidney stones, which are made up of salt, protein waste, and potassium.

So support your kidney health by not overdoing it on protein and find out how much your body really needs by working directly with a trusted nutritionist.

May lead to higher risk of heart disease

When it comes to protein intake, both type and amount matter. Diets high in red and processed meats are higher in saturated fat and sodium than other protein sources, which contribute to an increased risk of heart disease.' Sausages, bacon, and cold cuts are all processed meats, while beef, pork, lamb, and goat are considered red meat.

Instead, opt for lean proteins like chicken breast, fish, or plant-based options like beans, lentils, or soy like tofu.

May increase risk of cancer

Another risk of eating too much red or processed meat is that it can increase your risk of cancer. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR), eating more than 12 to 16 ounces of red meat per week (or 4 to 6 ounces per day) can increase your risk of colorectal cancer.

Therefore, it's best to enjoy red meat occasionally and keep processed meats like bacon or sausages to a minimum, rather than making them a regular part of your weekly meals.



While protein is an essential macronutrient, more doesn't always mean better. Consuming too much protein can negatively impact your health, increasing your risk of heart disease or cancer, putting stress on your kidneys, leading to gut health imbalances, and even crowding out other nutrients on your plate. As with all nutrients, balance is key. A varied, balanced diet that includes a variety of protein sources in moderation and plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is the best way to support your overall health.

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