

Warning signs that you are not getting enough protein every day

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Everyone is talking about getting enough protein these days. There are plenty of people on social media documenting their journeys to reaching their protein goals and touting the benefits of eating more protein. But what are the real signs that you're not getting enough of this macronutrient?

According to nutritionists, protein needs vary based on activity level, age, body weight, and health goals, and not getting enough of this nutrient can affect how your body functions. Here are some signs that you're not getting enough protein each day.



The effects of protein

Protein plays an important role in helping people feel full. People who consume a higher protein diet (about 30% of their daily calories from protein) feel fuller for longer, which can prevent mindless snacking and overeating throughout the day.

Additionally, protein plays an important role in building muscle and promoting muscle recovery after physical activity. A balanced diet that includes high-quality protein and other nutrient-rich foods is an essential component of overall strength and health.

Signs of protein deficiency

Here are 7 signs that your body may not be getting enough protein:

1. **Weakness or fatigue.** Lack of protein can cause you to lose muscle mass, which can leave you feeling weak and tired.
2. **Slow recovery after exercise.** Protein provides the body with the amino acids it needs to rebuild. Without protein, the body will have difficulty repairing muscle tissue damaged during exercise.
3. **Thinning hair or brittle nails.** When the body doesn't make enough proteins like keratin, the result can be ridged nails, thinning hair, and even dry, flaky skin.
4. **Frequent illness.** Without enough protein, your immune system can be compromised, meaning it's harder to fight off viruses and bacteria.
5. **Constant hunger.** Protein helps you feel fuller, so if you don't get enough protein in your diet, you may not feel full even after eating.

6. **Slows wound healing.** Your body needs protein to clot blood and produce enough collagen to heal wounds. The result can be that cuts, scrapes, and other injuries take longer to heal.

7. **Swelling.** Swelling in the limbs (also known as edema) can be a sign of protein deficiency because proteins circulating in the blood help prevent fluid buildup.



If you're ready to add more protein to your diet, start your day with protein. Try Greek yogurt with berries and whole-grain granola, eggs and oats for breakfast, or a protein smoothie made with milk, yogurt and fruit. For snacks, choose string cheese, roasted soybeans or beef jerky. At meals, try to fill a quarter of your plate with high-quality lean proteins like lean beef, fish or poultry. Aim for about 30 grams of protein at meals and at least 10 grams of protein at snacks.

So how much protein should you get each day? The general guideline is to aim for 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight if you're an average-sized adult with a sedentary lifestyle. To figure out your baseline, simply divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 to convert to kilograms, then multiply by 0.8.

However, protein needs can vary depending on factors such as age, activity level, and health goals. For example, athletes, pregnant women, or people trying to build muscle may need more protein to support their bodies. If you are unsure about your specific needs, consult a nutritionist for appropriate advice.

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