

# Is Whey Protein Important to Athletes?

**Years of scientific research confirm the benefits and safety of whey protein.** This easy-to-digest protein is efficiently absorbed into the body; therefore, it is often used after workouts to quickly replenish and nourish muscles.<sup>1</sup> **Based on already promising findings related to muscle recovery and exercise performance<sup>2,3</sup> athletes may want to consider whey protein as a convenient, highly bioavailable protein source.**<sup>†</sup> Read on to learn more about whey protein and recommended daily intakes for this nutrient.

## **Protein performs many important functions**

Whey protein is a high quality protein derived from cow's milk. It provides all the essential amino acids needed for numerous bodily functions. **In addition to being a source of energy, protein is the major structural component of all cells in the body.** Proteins function as enzymes, in membranes, as transport carriers, and as hormones, and are critical for cellular repair and building and repairing muscles and bones.<sup>4</sup> Researchers are currently studying **whey protein's potential role in supporting muscle recovery and exercise performance<sup>2,3</sup> cardiovascular health<sup>5,6</sup> immunity<sup>7,8</sup> and a variety of other health benefits.**<sup>†</sup>

## **How much protein do you need each day?**

The amount of protein you need each day largely depends on your body weight and the amount and type of exercise you do. Most healthy adults require a daily intake of at least 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight to meet their nutritional needs, but athletes require a little more. **Experts recommend between 1.2 to 1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight for endurance athletes, whereas protein needs for resistance and strength-trained athletes may be as high as 1.6 to 1.7 grams per kilogram of body weight per day.**<sup>9</sup> Divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 to determine how much you weigh in kilograms. For example, a 154-pound man weighs 70 kg.

As with all nutrients, more is not necessarily better: Research indicates that you won't see any extra gains in muscle with a protein intake above what your body requires. **For best results, consume a mixed meal providing carbohydrates, protein and fat as soon after your daily workout as possible.** As with all dietary supplements, if you have or suspect a medical condition, **check with your physician before adding a protein supplement to your supplement program.** This is especially true for people with kidney problems for whom a high protein diet would not be appropriate.<sup>†</sup>

## References

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