

Expert consensus finds that higher protein intake benefits adult bone health

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A new expert consensus endorsed by the European Society for Clinical and Economical Aspects of Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, and Musculoskeletal Diseases (ESCEO) and the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) has reviewed the benefits and safety of dietary protein for bone health, based on analyses of major research studies. The review, published in *Osteoporosis International*, found that a protein-rich diet, provided there is adequate calcium intake, is in fact beneficial for adult bone health. It also found no evidence that acid load due to higher dietary protein intakes, whether of animal or vegetable origin, is damaging to bone health.

The key findings of the extensive literature review include:

- Hip fracture risk is modestly decreased with higher dietary [protein](#) intakes, provided calcium intakes are adequate;
- Bone mineral density (BMD), which is an important determinant of [bone](#) strength, appears to be positively associated with dietary protein intakes;
- Protein and calcium combined in dairy products have beneficial effects on calciotropic hormones, [bone turnover markers](#) and BMD. The benefit of dietary proteins on bone outcomes seems to require adequate calcium intakes;
- There appears to be no direct evidence of osteoporosis progression, fragility fractures or altered [bone strength](#) with the acid load originating from a balanced diet.

Professor René Rizzoli, Professor at the Division of Bone Diseases of the Geneva University Hospitals and Faculty of Medicine, stated:

"Adequate intake of dietary protein, together with calcium, is needed for optimal bone growth in children and the maintenance of healthy bone at all ages. This message needs to be reinforced in view of currently circulating myths suggesting that too much protein causes 'acid load' and is damaging to bone health. In fact, in the elderly, we find that a common problem is not too much protein, but too little. This review of the literature confirms that a balanced diet with sufficient protein intake, regardless whether of animal or vegetable source, clearly benefits bone health when accompanied by adequate calcium intake. This is particularly important for seniors with osteoporosis, and individuals at risk of malnutrition due to acute or chronic illness, or recovering from an injury."

More information: R. Rizzoli et al, Benefits and safety of dietary protein for bone health—an expert consensus paper endorsed by the European Society for Clinical and Economical Aspects of Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, and Musculoskeletal Diseases and by the International Osteoporosis Foundation, *Osteoporosis International* (2018). DOI: [10.1007/s00198-018-4534-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00198-018-4534-5)

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