



Topic Disposition Summary: Protein Guidelines for the Elderly

Date: 8/16/2024

Nomination Number: 1092

Purpose: This document summarizes the information addressing a nomination submitted on February 21, 2024, through the Effective Health Care Website ([link to EHC posted topic nomination](#)). This information was used to inform the Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) Program decisions about whether to produce an evidence report on the topic, and if so, what type of evidence report would be most suitable.

Issue: The nominator is interested in determining the appropriate level of protein intake for older adults who wish to build muscle mass, rather than simply maintaining their current muscle mass. The inquiry focuses on whether current guidelines and evidence sufficiently address the protein needs of this population to support muscle growth and strength improvements.

Findings: The EPC Program will not develop a new systematic review because we found several recently published systematic reviews and current guidelines covering this topic comprehensively.

Background: Optimizing nutritional strategies to support muscle health has become increasingly important for older adults.¹ Sarcopenia, the age-related decline in muscle mass and function, significantly impacts the quality of life and independence in older adults.² Recent research has shifted focus from merely maintaining muscle mass in this population to strategies aimed at actively rebuilding and enhancing muscle strength.³ This has led to an increased interest in the role of protein intake as a critical factor in promoting muscle hypertrophy in older adults.

Recent systematic reviews have consistently shown that higher protein intake, ranging from 1.2 to 2.0 grams per kilogram of body weight per day, is beneficial for older adults aiming to increase muscle mass and strength.⁴⁻¹³ These findings are supported by evidence from both resistance training studies and dietary interventions, which indicate that adequate protein consumption is essential for maximizing muscle protein synthesis in this age group.^{3, 6, 10-11} The emphasis on high-quality protein sources, particularly those rich in essential amino acids like leucine, further underscores the importance of tailored nutritional strategies for older adults who seek to build muscle rather than just prevent its decline.

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Conflict of Interest: None of the investigators have any affiliations or financial involvement that conflicts with the material presented in this report.

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