

Is Whey the Way?

A.J. Kadhim-Saleh

Are you using whey protein as a way to build muscles, enhance physical activity or as a meal replacement strategy? Is this a way to safely boost our bodies? Are there risks?

What is whey protein?

- Rich sources of essential branched-chain amino acids with minimal fat and carbohydrate, which can provide the foundation to preserve muscle mass.

What are the benefits?

- Provide muscle accumulation and hypertrophy, features that are desired by athletes and those interested in gaining muscle mass
- Promote maintenance of lean body mass
- Thought to reduce fat levels

What are the risks?

Studies are inconclusive, but abnormal consumption of whey proteins may lead to:

- Liver failure
- Unwanted weight gain. If whey proteins are consumed in very high levels and without exercising, then the proteins will be stored as fat.

What is the strategic way of consuming whey proteins?

- Consume whey protein supplements before or shortly after a work out. Physical activity along with whey proteins will stimulate muscle build-up.
- Whey proteins can also be mixed with small amounts of carbohydrates to boost the body's energy

Final take-home messages:

- Use in moderation. Even athletes who are training require less than 2 g of protein per kg of body weight per day; the body cannot make use of it, and it may be harmful in excess amounts.
- Consume whey proteins in conjunction with exercising to gain optimal benefits.
- There are benefits related to use of whey proteins; and there can also be risks. So educate yourself. Read, Question and Ask your coach, trainer or health care provider for guidance. Consider your intensity of endurance or strength training, your regular intake of protein in your diet, cost and product quality.

References:

Current Opinion in Clinical Nutrition and Metabolic Care, 11(1), 40-44. (2008)

www.coach.ca Coaching Association of Canada