

New CSIRO report reveals why “more protein” could be missing the point

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Summary: New CSIRO report reveals Australians may be prioritising quantity over quality when it comes to protein, and launches new Protein Calculator to help people make more personalised choices for better health outcomes.

A new report from CSIRO, Australia’s national science agency, has found that while most Australians might be hitting general protein targets, they may be missing the mark when it comes to supporting weight loss and healthy ageing.

The *Protein for Weight Loss* report reveals that Australian adults consume an average of around 91g of protein per day (103 g for men and 79 g for women), which broadly meets baseline health needs. However some Australians could be falling short of what is considered optimal for weight loss, ageing well, and muscle preservation.

With two in three Australian adults overweight or obese, and an ageing population requiring more targeted nutrition, Accredited Practising Dietitian for the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet, Nicole Pritchard says it’s time to shift the conversation from “more protein” to smarter protein.

“Protein is one of the most talked-about nutrients right now, but the issue isn’t just quantity, it’s also the quality consumed, and whether people are eating protein in a way that actually supports their health goals,” she says.

According to the report, higher-protein diets can improve satiety, reduce cravings and help preserve lean muscle during weight loss, particularly when paired with a lower-energy diet. For those actively trying to lose weight, optimal protein targets are often higher, around 110–145 g for men and 85–110 g per day for women, depending on body size and health goals.

How protein is distributed across the day also plays a key role. Rather than concentrating intake at dinner, the report supports a more balanced approach, with 25–30 g of protein per main meal linked to improved appetite control and muscle outcomes. This principle underpins the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet which is designed to provide at least 25 g of protein at every main meal.

According to the evidence detailed in the report, protein needs vary significantly across life stages and health contexts, yet intake often falls short. Among GLP-1 users, reduced appetite can lead to under-consumption, with one study showing fewer than 10% meeting protein targets. Women in menopause require around 1.0–1.2 g/kg/day to support muscle and bone health, while older Australians are also often under-consuming, despite higher needs.



The report also encourages Australians to prioritise whole, minimally processed protein sources, over ultra-processed “high-protein” products, with affordable options like eggs, dairy, legumes and meat offering strong nutritional value. It also highlights emerging evidence around “protein dilution”, where diets high in ultra-processed foods are lower in protein and higher in refined carbs and fats, meaning people may eat more overall to meet their protein needs.

“Being smart about protein intake is about choosing whole foods, building meals around them, and spreading intake across the day,” says Nicole. “We also encourage Australians to look beyond ‘protein washing’ claims, and avoid products high in added sugars and fats that may undermine health (and budget) goals.”

With one in four Australians following a specific diet or eating pattern, the report highlights the need for more tailored, practical guidance. In response, the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet has developed a free online Protein Calculator to help Australians understand the right protein targets and recommendations for their age, sex, weight and health goals.

“Protein needs are not one-size-fits-all, and understanding your own protein needs is a great place to start,” says Nicole. “At key life stages or during weight loss, being more deliberate about protein can make a meaningful difference, and the Protein Calculator helps Australians take a more informed approach to their protein and overall health needs.”

Understand your own protein needs and find out your personal protein target with the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet’s free online Protein Calculator at totalwellbeingdiet.com/protein.

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About the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet

Developed and substantiated through over 20 years of clinical research by CSIRO scientists, the Total Wellbeing Diet is a 12-week high protein, low GI, online program designed to be flexible and suitable for everyone. Unlike many other popular fad diets that count calories, the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet uses a special food group system, designed to help members get their optimal nutrition from natural foods. The program also allows a daily indulgence as part of its meal plan, reinforcing its non-restrictive approach to healthy eating. To date, the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet remains one of Australia’s most trusted and widely used weight-loss programs.

Assets:

Media kit available [here](#).

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