



The protein gap: CSIRO highlights the importance of protein during menopause

Embargoed until 12.01am, Tuesday 1 September 2026

Summary: Midlife weight gain is common in many women, with new analysis from CSIRO, Australia's national science agency suggesting that a dietary protein gap could be contributing to this.

New analysis from CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, has identified a protein gap among women aged 40-55, with survey data showing weight gain is commonly reported by women in this typical menopausal transition age.

According to an online survey of 1,303 female CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet members, almost eight in ten reported weight gain during this life stage.

CSIRO Research Scientist Dr Gilly Hendrie said the findings highlight that eating less is not always the answer to midlife weight gain and that many women aged 40-55 may not be eating enough protein at this stage of life.

Dr Hendrie said CSIRO's separate examination of the 2023-24 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey also found that dietary protein intake for women in the typical menopausal transition age (40-55 years) is around 35 grams short of optimal dietary protein intake levels (1.2 g/kg body weight). With just one in three survey respondents reporting a protein intake at this level.

"When weight gain occurs during the transition to menopause, it can be tempting to simply eat less. But making the right food choices and having enough protein becomes especially important at this life stage. Adequate dietary protein helps to manage appetite, support muscle mass, strength and overall physical health," Dr Hendrie said.

Almost 90 per cent of female Total Wellbeing Diet members surveyed also said menopause had some impact on their wellbeing, with one in five describing that impact as significant. Encouragingly, half of the survey respondents reported that following the Total Wellbeing Diet program helped improve their overall wellbeing.

"Weight gain and its flow-on effects on wellbeing are commonly experienced by women during menopause, and yet many are unsure what they can actually do to manage their weight during this time," Dr Hendrie said.



"The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet is designed to make higher-protein eating easier and more practical, helping women close the protein gap without taking a restrictive approach."

"There is no one-size-fits-all protein target, which is why understanding your own needs is so important. For women navigating menopause, being more deliberate about dietary protein can be a simple but meaningful step for supporting long-term health."

Find your personal protein target with the free CSIRO Protein Calculator at totalwellbeingdiet.com/protein.

ENDS

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 food group system, designed to help members get their optimal nutrition from whole foods. The program also allows a daily indulgence as part of its meal plan, reinforcing its non-restrictive approach to healthy eating. The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet is one of Australia's most trusted and widely used weight-loss programs.

Assets:

Media kit available at request.

Media contacts:

CSIRO: Bianca Frew, bianca.frew@csiro.au, 0476 858 973

Davis Communications: Kasey Simpson, kasey.simpson@daviscommunications.com.au, 0401 931 577