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From the team of  
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at the **Beef** Information  
Centre

February 6, 2009

## Protein for preventing sarcopenia

A recent review stresses the importance of consuming enough protein with each meal to prevent or slow muscle loss with aging (known as sarcopenia). A dietary plan that includes 25-30 g of high quality protein per meal is ideal according to this review of current evidence. The review appears in the January 2009 issue of Current Opinion in Clinical Nutrition and Metabolic Care.

It is well known that dietary amino acids from protein are a fundamental prerequisite for muscle protein synthesis. Recent research indicates muscle protein synthesis may be blunted in the elderly if protein intakes fall below about 20 g per meal. An intake of about 25-30 g of protein per meal is optimal for stimulating muscle protein synthesis in young and older individuals.

Sarcopenia is thought to affect about 30% of individuals over 60 years of age and more than 50% of those over 80 years. It is characterized by a progressive loss of about 3-8% of lean muscle mass per decade after the age of 30 years. This review proposes a novel and practical dietary approach for preventing or slowing down muscle loss that tends to occur with aging.

### For your practice:

Research shows that the dose and distribution of protein across meals matters for optimal health as people age. Dietary plans that include 25-30 g of high quality protein at each meal may help maximize muscle protein synthesis. High quality protein is found in foods such as lean red meats, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products. Emphasizing the importance of eating enough protein with each meal may be a useful strategy to help older adults maintain muscle mass.

### Want to learn more?

Read the study abstract, [\*Dietary protein recommendations and the prevention of sarcopenia\*](#), by Paddon-Jones D and Rasmussen BB. Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care. 2009; 12:86-90.

See our [Nutrition Perspective](#) newsletters for health professionals: *The Satiating Power of Protein* (May 2008) and *Protein – Can higher intakes benefit health?* (August 2005). Each includes a 2-page client fact sheet.

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