

American Kidney Fund

AKF Warns About Impact Of High-Protein Diets On Kidney Health

American Kidney Fund on April 25, 2002

The American Kidney Fund is the leading national voluntary health organization providing direct financial assistance for the benefit of kidney patients supported by comprehensive educational programs, clinical research and community service projects.

(Rockville, MD) The American Kidney Fund (AKF) is warning Americans about popular high-protein diets for weight loss. The diets place such a significant strain on the kidneys that even conditioned athletes can become dehydrated, according to researchers at the University of Connecticut.

AKF Chairman of Medical Affairs Paul W. Crawford, MD said, "We have long suspected that high-protein weight loss diets could have a negative impact on the kidneys, and now we have research to support our suspicions. Dehydration forces the kidneys to work harder to clean toxins from the blood. Kidneys not only filter the blood, but they help regulate blood pressure and the number of red blood cells."

The researchers studied five fit endurance runners who consumed a low, then a medium, and finally a high-protein diet. During the high-protein phase, the runners consumed about 30% of their total calories from foods such as eggs, steak, and so-called "power bars". Blood tests showed that increasing the protein intake led to a progression toward dehydration, and that a greater strain was placed on the kidneys due to the excessive amount of protein.

"Increased protein intake leads to a build-up of nitrogen in the blood. The nitrogen ends up at the kidney in the form of urea, where it needs to be cleaned from the blood and gotten rid of in the urine," explained Dr. Crawford. "The resulting increase in urination can cause dehydration, further straining the kidneys," he added.

In otherwise healthy individuals, a protein intake of no more than 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight was recommended by the researchers in order to avoid negative long-term effects. Dr. Crawford also discussed the risk that

bodybuilders take in eating high-protein diets while building muscle. He noted, "Bodybuilders could be predisposing themselves to chronic kidney disease because hyperfiltration (the strain on the kidneys) can produce scarring in the kidneys, reducing kidney function."

"Chronic kidney disease is not to be taken lightly, and there is no cure for kidney failure. The only treatments are kidney dialysis and kidney transplantation. This research shows that even in healthy athletes, kidney function was impacted and that ought to send a message to anyone who is on a high-protein weight loss diet," concluded Dr. Crawford.

This site is not affiliated with, sponsored by, or related in any way to Atkins Nutritionals, Inc. If you would like to visit their site, please use the following link: www.atkins.com

All Content Copyright© 2014-2019 AtkinsFacts.org
Link

<https://atkinsfacts.org/opinions/american-kidney-fund>