



Animal Protein Intake Linked to Higher Mortality for People With Cirrhosis

Consuming more animal protein was linked to a fourfold higher risk of death, while dairy protein lowered the risk.

December 11, 2023 By [Sukanya Charuchandra](#)

Greater total and dairy protein intake are associated with a lower risk of death among people with [liver cirrhosis](#), but eating more animal protein may nearly quadruple mortality, according to study findings published in [BMC Gastroenterology](#).

Over time, [hepatitis B](#), [hepatitis C](#), [fatty liver disease](#) and other causes can lead to serious liver complications, including cirrhosis. Liver cirrhosis is linked to worse clinical outcomes and a higher risk of mortality.

Zahra Yari, PhD, of the Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Iran, and colleagues set out to assess the potential link between dietary protein and mortality among people with cirrhosis.

The researchers included 121 people who had been diagnosed with cirrhosis at least six months ago. A majority of the participants (68%) were men, and the average age was 55 years. The researchers evaluated the dietary intake of all participants using a 168-item validated food frequency questionnaire. The participants' protein intake was categorized as vegetable, dairy or animal.

Over 48 months of follow-up, the researchers recorded a total of 43 deaths, 47% of which were attributed to liver failure. They found that total protein intake and dairy protein intake were each linked to a 62% lower risk of death due to cirrhosis. Vegetable protein intake was linked to lower mortality, but the association was not statistically significant. In contrast, animal protein intake was linked to a nearly fourfold higher risk of death.

"A comprehensive evaluation of the associations of dietary protein intake with cirrhosis-related mortality indicated that a higher intake of total and dairy protein and lower intakes of animal protein are associated with a reduced risk of mortality in cirrhotic patients," wrote the researchers. "Further studies are recommended to evaluate effectiveness and appropriate amount of total, dairy, vegetable and animal protein in cirrhotic patients."

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