Big Breakfast with Whey Protein Beneficial in Type 2 Diabetes

04 Apr 2016 --- New research has shown that whey protein improves weight loss, satiety, and glycemic control among patients with Type 2 diabetes.

Adults with Type 2 diabetes who start the day with a large breakfast that includes whey protein may be able to lose weight and better manage the disease, said Daniela Jakubowicz, MD, professor of medicine at Tel Aviv University.

In a study conducted by Dr Jakubowicz and colleagues, 48 overweight and obese participants with Type 2 diabetes ate the same number of calories over a large breakfast (660 kcal), medium-sized lunch (567 kcal), and small dinner (276 kcal) for 23 months.

The researchers assigned participants to 1 of 3 breakfast diets: Primarily whey protein such as whey protein shakes (n=17), other proteins including eggs, soy, or tuna (n=16), or a breakfast high in carbohydrates or starch (n=15). Participants in both protein groups ingested 49 grams of protein at breakfast compared with 17 grams in the carbohydrate group.

Dr Jakubowicz discussed the results at ENDO 2016 in Boston MA. Patients in the whey protein group had greater weight loss at 12 weeks compared with the other protein and carbohydrate groups (7.6 kg vs 6.1 kg and 3.1 kg, respectively; P<.0001).

Patients in the whey protein group were more satiated and less hungry throughout the day and had lower glucose spikes after meals. Greater reductions in HbA1c were also noted among these patients, with the percent change being 11.5% for the whey protein group vs 7.7% for the other protein group and 4.6% for the carbohydrate group (P<.0001).

Additionally, area under the curve (AUC) for overall postprandial glucose (PPG) was 12% lower in the other protein group and 19% lower in the whey protein group, as compared with the carbohydrate group (P<.0001), while AUC for overall insulin was 38% higher in the whey protein group and 27% higher in the other protein group (P<.0001).

Dr Jakubowicz added that the whey protein diet significantly suppresses the hunger hormone ghrelin.

"We can see a significant decrease in body weight in the whey protein diet compared to the other groups," she said during a press conference. "Also we can see the significant decrease in HbA1c in the whey breakfast diet. Along the day, the overall postprandial glycemia is significantly lower along the day in comparison to the other diets."

"Whey protein should be considered an important adjuvant in the management of the Type 2 diabetes," she concluded.

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