



## The Weekly: July 20, 2011

### **Whey protein may assist in weight management**

A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* shows that whey protein may help improve body weight and composition. The researchers tracked body weight, body composition, and waist circumference data from 73 overweight and obese adults assigned to consume a 200-calorie beverage, consisting of 28 g of whey or soy protein plus carbohydrate or carbohydrate alone, twice a day for 23 weeks. No other dietary direction was given.

While there were no significant differences at the start of the trial between groups, at the end of the trial, the whey protein group's body weight was approximately 4 lbs lower than the carbohydrate group, and their body fat was 5 lbs less than the carbohydrate group. Additionally, the whey protein group's waist size was nearly an inch smaller than both the carbohydrate and soy protein groups. Those who consumed soy protein did not exhibit significant differences from the carbohydrate group.

Study data indicate that all groups compensated for the additional 400 calories per day by cutting back on other foods, as none gained a significant amount of weight during the 23-week period. However, the whey protein group likely made up for the added calories from the beverage more effectively, since they showed improvements in body weight and composition compared to the carbohydrate group. This could be related to enhanced satiety with whey protein, as participants in the whey protein group showed significantly lower levels of the hunger-stimulating hormone, ghrelin, compared to the other two groups.

While more research is needed to fully understand this effect, these results do help to shed light on specific benefits of whey protein. This study was funded by the U.S. Whey Protein Research Consortium and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service.