

High-Protein Diets: A Bad Idea for Hypertensives

In a new advisory statement, the American Heart Association warned about the health risks of current popular high-protein diets. Not only is there no proof that they will help to maintain weight loss, they pose potential health threats to those who follow them for more than a short time, says AHA.

A diet that is high in complex carbohydrates and includes fruits, vegetables, non-fat dairy products and whole grains has been shown to reduce blood pressure. Many of the popular high-protein diets limit such foods, which are rich in calcium, potassium and magnesium. They thereby may lessen the benefit of weight loss on blood pressure reduction.

Although proteins are essential for maintaining the body's structure and proper function, most of us eat more protein than our bodies need, and excess protein can in itself increase health risks. Unneeded protein may put some people with kidney or liver disease at risk of worsening their disease, according to an AHA spokesman.

Source: AHA. High-protein diets not proven effective and may pose health risks. Journal report, Oct. 8, 2001.