



## Healthy Aging and Sarcopenia

Sarcopenia is the gradual loss of muscle mass that can occur in healthy adults as we age. It actually begins after age 30 and accelerates after age 60. The difference in muscle mass between a 20 year old and an 80 year old is about 30%. Reduction in muscle mass, strength and function can reduce the independence and health of the aging adult. Sarcopenia can also increase the risk for morbidity and mortality through its association with chronic illnesses, including CVD, diabetes and obesity. The more prevalent the sarcopenia, the higher the risk for these chronic diseases. Loss of muscle can also contribute to reduced mobility, increased hospitalizations due to falls, prolonged recovery and increased mortality.

What are some of the factors that can contribute to an earlier onset and more rapid progression of sarcopenia?

*\*Lack of physical activity*

*\*Inflammatory conditions*

*\*Blood sugar imbalances*

*\*History of smoking*

*\*Hormone imbalances*

*\*Low vitamin D levels*

Understanding these factors is important but also knowing what steps we can take therapeutically to slow this process down is crucial. These steps would include:

\*Adequate daily protein intake. Ideal protein intake for a healthy older adult is 1.2-2.0 g protein/kg body weight/day. Protein powders with added BCAAS (branched-chain amino acids). This especially includes the amino acid, leucine, known for its impact on protein synthesis. We can find leucine in foods like salmon, chickpeas, brown rice, eggs, soybeans, nuts and beef.

\*Omega-3 PUFAs or EPA and DHA. Omega-3 PUFAs have been shown to slow the decline in muscle mass and function. Therapeutic intake of 2-4 g/day can also stimulate muscle protein synthesis.

\*Normal vitamin D status has been shown to improve muscle performance.

\*Regular, daily exercise has been shown to support healthy muscle mass and function.

We cannot stop the normal aging of the human body but we can do as much as possible to keep our musculoskeletal system strong and active.

## IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH... IMPROVE YOUR LIFE!



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