

How Low Pro Go?
can you Go?
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THE GREAT
PROTEIN
CHALLENGE

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Australians with a rare genetic disease live on only 1 to 8 grams of protein a day.

The Great Protein Challenge asks Australians to walk in their shoes for 24 hours.

Australians are being asked to give up protein for 24 hours during February to help raise much needed awareness and funds to support those living with a debilitating, rare disease which means they can only eat 1 to 8 grams of protein a day, less than one egg.

The Great Protein Challenge, launched by the Metabolic Dietary Disorders Association (MDDA) today, encourages everyday Australians to experience a typical day in the life of a person living with Inborn Errors of (protein) Metabolism (IEMs), the most common form being Phenylketonuria or PKU. This means removing protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs, dairy, lentils, nuts, pasta, soy, chocolate and many vegetables from the diet for one day.

"Around 1600 Australians live with a rare Inborn Error of Metabolism, which means that they can only eat between 1 to 8 grams of protein a day. This compares to the average daily consumption of 46 to 64 grams of protein a day for those without living with this disorder," Monique Cooper, President of MDDA, said.

"It's vital that those with PKU and other IEMs stick to a strict, lifelong, low-protein diet to avoid serious health complications caused from elevated protein levels in the bloodstream. This can be toxic for those with PKU and other IEMs, affecting brain development in babies and infants, and impacts concentration, mood and energy levels in teenagers and adults. Over time, high levels of protein in the blood may lead to brain damage and other serious health complications for those with PKU and other IEMs," Ms Cooper said.

"The only treatment currently available is a medically controlled diet and prescribed supplements. There is no cure and is a daily challenge for those with this rare disease. We are calling on Australians to walk in the shoes of those with PKU and other IEMs for one day to help with understanding and awareness," she said.

The Great Protein Challenge kicks off on 1 February and will conclude on Rare Disease Day on 28 February. There are a range of ways to participate:

Visit thegreatproteinchallenge.com.au to register and donate

Choose to **PLAY** or **PLEDGE** to support the cause and help raise awareness

PLAY: Abstain from eating protein-rich foods (such as meat, eggs, chocolate or dairy) for 24 hours, and ask friends to PLEDGE their support. Registrations are being taken for individuals, teams, companies, schools (as part of the school lunchbox challenge) and dietitians

PLEDGE: donate funds directly to support our cause OR to sponsor and support a friend taking the challenge and PLAYING in the protein challenge

Share experiences on social media by using **#lowprochallenge**

Encourage friends, family or colleagues to get involved

"We are encouraging all Australians – whether you want to participate as an individual, a team, or as part of a company or school – to show us How Low Pro Can You Go to support those in the community living with this debilitating rare condition," Ms Cooper said.

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About The Great Protein Challenge

The Great Protein Challenge began in 2018, raising \$16,000 and much needed awareness and support for the debilitating, rare genetic metabolic Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEMs), the most common being Phenylketonuria or PKU.

The Great Protein Challenge will run for the month of February, commencing on 1 February and ending on Rare Disease Day, which takes place on 28 February. Participants are asked to play for a 24 hour period.

All funds raised through The Great Protein Challenge will help to raise awareness and support for the Australian Inborn Errors of Metabolism community.

About Metabolic Dietary Disorders Association (MDDA)

MDDA is a national registered charity, founded in 1996 to support families and individuals affected by Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEMs), which are rare genetic disorders.

