

Bodybuilder's death offers warning about genetics and rising use of protein supplements

The death of an Australian bodybuilder with a rare genetic disorder should serve as a cautionary tale for those who use protein supplements, a sport doctor says.

Meegan Hefford, 25, made international headlines with her death this week from complications caused by her use of protein supplements. The young mother reported feeling fatigued and “weird” before she was found unconscious in her apartment, and died in hospital two days later.

Doctors say Hefford died due to urea cycle disorder, a rare condition that prevents the body from fully clearing broken-down protein byproducts out of the bloodstream. UCD can also lead to slurred speech, confusion and a buildup of fluid in the brain.

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Sports medicine expert Dr. Chris Woollam says he's concerned by the fitness trend toward supplements. “We get enough protein in our diet, generally,” he said. “Why people are pushing higher and higher levels, I'm not sure.”

Dr. Woollam says additional protein can be helpful for those training their muscles at a high level, but the benefit is “not that much more,” and only a little extra protein is needed. However, if an individual has UCD, the excess urea that can build up from high levels of protein could ultimately be very harmful.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Death by Protein: Supplements, genetic disorder make for deadly combo](#)