



IN/PULSE

FEMALE BODY BUILDER DIES FROM EATING TOO MUCH PROTEIN

Instagram/Meegan Hefford

She didn't know she had a rare condition that made it hard to break down protein

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Wednesday 16 August 2017 08:49 BST



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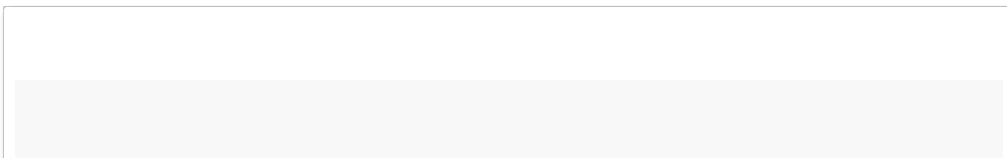


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A young woman has died after consuming too much protein.

25-year-old bodybuilder Meegan Hefford, from West Australia, was found unconscious in her apartment and rushed to hospital. She died two days later.

It wasn't until her death that doctors discovered Hefford had been living with a rare condition that meant her body couldn't break down protein.





A post shared by • MEEGAN HEFFORD • (@meeganheff) on May 22, 2017 at 6:32am PDT

Hefford, a mother of two and paramedic trainee, had been following a strict diet in the run up to a bodybuilding competition in September.

She was consuming high levels of protein from shakes, supplements and protein-rich foods.



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by Taboola

But unbeknownst to her, Hefford was suffering from a rare condition called urea cycle disorder (UCD), which is genetic.

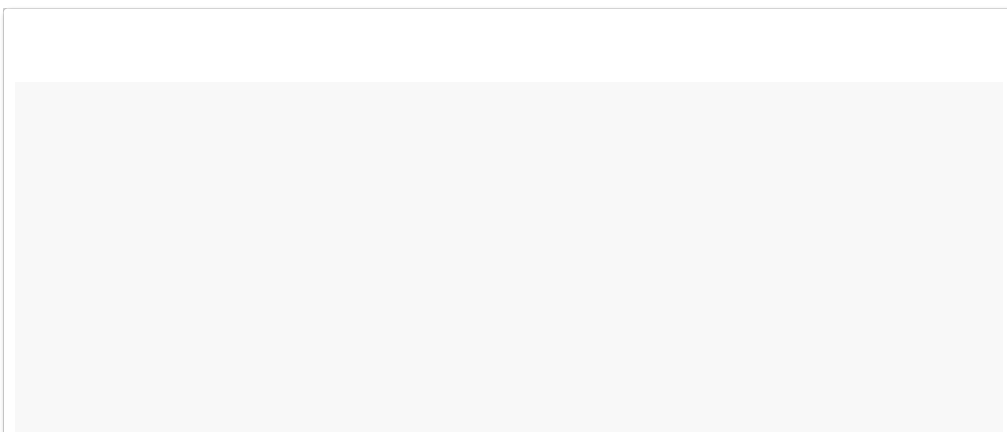
Roughly one in 8,000 people have UCD but many do not know. The condition causes a build-up of ammonia in the blood and accumulation of fluid in the brain, which eventually leads to brain damage.

Hefford's death certificate lists UCD as well as an "intake of bodybuilding supplements" as causes of her death.

And her family are now calling for tighter restrictions on protein powders and supplements.

"I know there are people other than Meegan who have ended up in hospital because they've overloaded on supplements," Hefford's mother Michelle White said.

"The sale of these products needs to be more regulated."





A post shared by • MEEGAN HEFFORD • (@meeganheff) on May 9, 2017 at 9:00pm PDT

White said that her daughter would regularly go to the gym twice a day in an effort to prepare for the bodybuilding competition. But in June, Hefford started telling her family she felt lethargic and “weird.”

White had no idea Hefford was taking supplements but found lots, as well as a detailed diet plan, in her daughter’s home after she died.

She leaves behind two children: a seven-year-old daughter and five-year-old son.



A post shared by • MEEGAN HEFFORD • (@meeganheff) on May 13, 2017 at 11:13pm PDT

Hefford has also donated her heart, lungs and kidneys.



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“Losing Meegan, it’s so awful and I still can’t believe she’s gone but I have to focus on the positives that at least I had 25 years with her and she jammed so much into her life, it’s almost like she knew her time would be short,” White said.

Experts advise that protein shakes and supplements should be taken in moderation and never as meal replacements.


Considering many people may not know you have an underlying condition, it’s important to stay within the daily guideline amounts.

Current government recommendations for adult men are 55.5g a day for men and 45g for women. ●

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