


Buying Whey Protein Isolate? Consider This Label Trick...

written by Mike Roberto | March 19, 2018



Buying Whey Protein Isolate?
Check out this one quick tip

Hint:

blog.PricePlow.com/guides

When it comes to whey protein isolates, these two topped last year's Protein Wars. But they also passed another test we learned about... come see an isolate-based supplement that *didn't*.

In our last article, we put together a quick whey protein buyer's guide, discussing what type of whey protein you should look for (if at all!), depending on your lactose sensitivity.

For those who are quite lactose intolerant but not "devastatingly" lactose intolerant, it's suggested that you get a **pure whey protein isolate** powder, or avoid the dairy-based powders altogether.

But how do you find a quality whey protein isolate?

A few incredible pure whey protein isolate supplements are *Core Nutritionals ISO*, *Raw Nutrition CBum Itholate*, and *Kaged Whey Protein Isolate*.

But let's say you want to find your own deals out there, or want some shopping suggestions in general. What next?

The whey isolate buying tips most of us know

Many of our readers are familiar with the following tips:

- **Look at the macronutrients**



Below you will see a very clean label. We like that NutraBio 3rd-party lab tests!

In general, whey protein isolate proteins are very low-carb, very low-fat. After all, they've mostly been filtered out!

Companies may add some fats or carbs back in for flavoring, thickening, or creaming. A couple carbs or a couple grams of fat doesn't bother us, but you want to make sure you're not getting a tub that's half filler!

Note that in chocolate-based powders, cocoa almost *always* adds at least a carb, oftentimes two. Don't sweat it!

• Percent protein by weight

Related to the above, it's always a good idea to divide the grams of protein on the label (say 25g) by the grams in each scoop (say 29g).

WPI-90 Raw Materials

Truth be told, most "WPI-90" on the market is really around 88% protein by weight. It's tough to find a protein that's truly 90% pure. So companies don't have a ton of room for error if they want to keep it above 85%!

If you're going for *pure* protein with as little filler as possible, you'll want the resulting number to be above .85, or 85% protein by weight.

You'll see that vanilla and some fruity flavors require less flavoring to make it work, while richer chocolates and peanut butter style flavors require more mass, thus lowering our percent protein by weight.

- The gums, additives, and thickeners



We can't tell you what *you* want, but note that some products have more thickeners than others. This could be good if you don't want as thin of an isolate protein... but it's a negative if you're going for ultra-pure protein.

Just start to recognize what thickeners, gums, and sweeteners you like over time and steer in that direction.

At PricePlow we're pretty flexible with this, and are more interested in the flavor systems themselves. We are okay with sucralose, but stevia-sweetened proteins are finally to the point where they're definitely good enough that a true "naturalist" has nothing to fear with newer products out there!

But now, for the reason you're here: the trick that you can use to spot a *questionable* whey isolate:

Look at the cholesterol content!!!

Nobody ever talks about cholesterol when it comes to protein powders – especially not with isolates. After all, unless we're rockin the bacon-flavored protein, we shouldn't expect to see much – it's mostly supposed to be filtered

(or *isolated*) out... right?!

Let's take a look at NutraBio's and MAN Sports':

NutraBio's 100% Whey Protein Isolate Ingredients

Supplement Facts

Serving size: 1 scoop/4.75tbsp. (29.76 grams)

Servings per container: 76.2

Amount Per Serving

NUTRABIO[®]
WITHOUT COMPROMISE SINCE 1996

% Daily Value

Calories 110

Cholesterol <5mg <1%*

Total Carbohydrate 1g <1%*

Protein 25g 50%*

Calcium 138mg 15%*

Phosphorus 64mg 6%*

Magnesium 22mg 6%*

Sodium 95mg 4%*

Potassium 150mg 4%*

Whey Protein Isolate (non-denatured) 28.74g †

(28.74 grams WPI90 yielding 25 grams of complete protein)(CFM cross flow micro and ultra-filtered. Cold processed. Instantized with sunflower lecithin.)

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

† Daily Value not established.

Other Ingredients: Flavoring (natural flavor 500mg, xanthan gum 350mg, salt 110mg, sucralose 60mg).

SUPPLEMENT FACTS

Serving Size: 1 Scoop

(30.03g)

Servings Per Container: 30

	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value*
Calories	110	
Calories from Fat	0	
Total Fat	0 g	1%*
Saturated Fat	0 g	0*
Trans Fat	0 g	†
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Sodium	180 mg	8%
Potassium	134 mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate	2 g	1%*
Dietary Fiber	0 g	0%
Sugars	0 g	†
Protein	25 g	48%
Calcium	122 mg	9%
Whey Protein Isolate	28g	†

(CFM cross-flow micro-filtered, cold processed & instantized WPI 90 Yielding 25.2 complete protein)

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

†Daily Value not established.

Other Ingredients: Natural & Artificial Flavors, Xanthan Gum, Arcacia Gum, Salt, Acesulfame Potassium (Ace-K), Sucralose.

Between these two labels, we can see NutraBio claiming <5mg Cholesterol, and MAN Sports claiming 0g cholesterol!

Our information is only as strong as our trust

Disclaimer: When analyzing labels, unless there are third party lab tests showing the data we're interested in, we have to take the brand's word for it. Many brands may not test for something such as cholesterol in each batch.

There is a chance that the data has been provided by the raw material supplier, and added with the data from the flavoring/thickening agents.

So while there may still be inaccuracies, when the labels are truthful, there is a lot that can be hidden.

So it looks like MAN Sports and NutraBio have *minimal* amounts of cholesterol, like a good isolate should. Sniff test passes on all accounts.

A general rule of thumb

So when buying isolate protein, take a look at that cholesterol number.

If the brand is using a high-quality quality protein source (and is labeling honestly) it should be:

- under 80mg for a concentrate,
- under 20mg for an isolate, and
- under 10mg for what we'd consider a "premium" isolate.

That's of course a general rule of thumb (for roughly 22-25g protein scoop), but it's one that seems to work more often than not.

When things get a bit tricky...

However, there are some products out there that occasionally emphasize the use of the word "ISOLATE" on their labels.

Sometimes they are labeled in such a way that you'd think it was *completely* made of whey protein isolate. Other times, such as the example shown below, the marketing/labeling makes no such claims, but the wording is so tricky that several sites – including our own until we did this research – have it categorized with the pure isolates!

Don't fear cholesterol in your diet

Note that we are *not* anti-cholesterol in our diets. In fact, PricePlow is pro-cholesterol, as it is literally the backbone of our hormones.

We are merely using it as a litmus test for whey protein quality, especially when looking at whey isolate based protein.

Serving Size: 1 Scoop (35g)		
Amount Per Scoop		% DV
Calories	130	
Calories from Fat	20	
Total Fat	2 g	3%*
Saturated Fat	1 g	5%*
Cholesterol	70 mg	23%
Total Carbohydrate	2 g	1%*
Sugars	2 g	†
Protein	25 g	50%*
Calcium	160 mg	16%
Iron	.8 mg	4%
Sodium	120 mg	5%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
† Daily Value (DV) not established.

Other Ingredients:
Premium Protein Blend (Whey Peptides, Whey Protein Isolate, Whey Protein Isolate 97%), Cocoa (Processed With Alkali), Soy or Sunflower Lecithin, Salt, Gum Blend (Cellulose Gum, Xanthan Gum, Carrageenan), Calcium Carbonate, Natural And Artificial Flavor, Silicon Dioxide, Acesulfame-Potassium, Sucralose.

What gives with all that cholesterol?!?!

2g of fat and 2g of carbohydrates are “low-fat” and “low-carb” enough for us. Of course the NutraBio and MAN Sports products above are lower, but 2g isn’t exactly striking.

However, there are two red flags here:

1. The first is **70mg cholesterol** – nearly 15x the amount of NutraBio’s pure isolate!

What gives? Shouldn’t that have been filtered out?!

2. Well, the hint is in the *second* red flag. Can you spot it yet?

If not, that’s subject for the next article in this series, but the question someone will need to answer is, “*What are **WHEY PEPTIDES?***” Turns out, nobody really knows, as we can’t find a legal definition for it, but it’s probably *not* pure whey isolate....

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