

Can Ajinomoto Co. Export Japan's Healthy Lifespan?

Why Do Japanese People Live So Long?

When you imagine living in Japan, what kind of images spring to mind?

Most people probably imagine living in a small room in a big city. Getting stuffed onto a morning subway that's so crowded sometimes you can't put your feet down. Regularly working overtime past midnight. And probably taking up smoking to deal with all the stress.

The truth is, this impression isn't necessarily wrong. In a recent survey published by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, up to 40% of working-age men reported that they "can't sleep" because of workplace stress¹. And Japan smokes substantially more tobacco than most other countries—more than one-third of men aged 15 years and older smoke².

It would be pretty difficult to find an expert who would claim that high levels of stress, insufficient sleep, and smoking cigarettes are healthy behaviors. And yet, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), Japan's average life expectancy at birth is 83.7 years. This means that Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world³.

Although it's impossible to fully explain why this is true, the main causes of Japan's advanced longevity are commonly thought to be a "walking lifestyle" coupled with Japan's diet. According to another WHO report, 98% of Japanese school children walk or bike to school every day⁴, which means that most of them get their recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day just by going to school⁵. With regard to food, compared to other developed nations, Japanese people tend to eat fewer calories per day, more vegetables, and less dessert⁵.

■ Children Walking to School



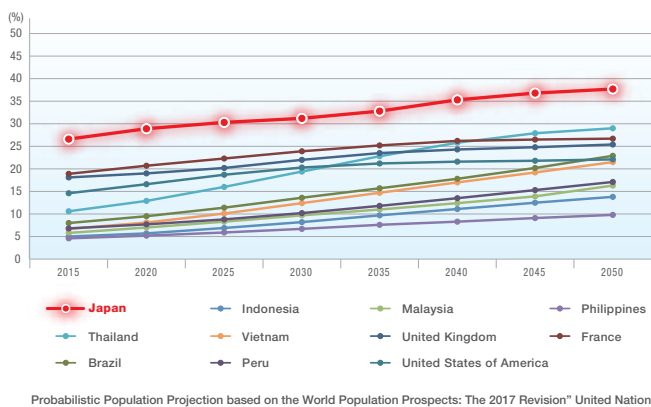
As a Japanese company with a long history in food and science, [Ajinomoto Co., Inc.](#) ("Ajinomoto Co.") seeks to better understand the keys to longevity, and spread them around the world.



Longevity—Great for Individuals, But Challenging for a Country

Everybody wants to live a long life. But the fact that this wish is coming true represents a big challenge for Japan as a whole. While the number of elderly people in Japan continues to increase, the overall population is actually declining⁶. As a result, the percentage of people 65 years of age or older is expected to reach almost 40% of the total population by the year 2050⁶. This presents a number of clear challenges for the country, including loss of workplace productivity—because after all, most people do want to retire eventually—and soaring healthcare and elderly nursing costs.

Probabilities Projection of Population 65+ by Country, 2015-2050



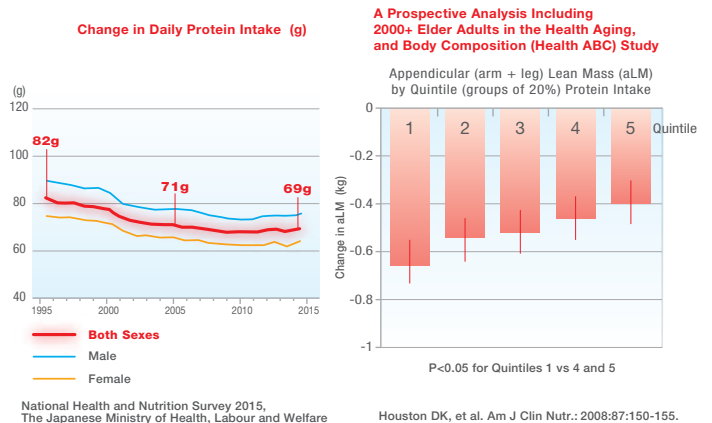
As a result, Japan is shifting its focus away from simply prolonging life, and towards prolonging a healthy lifespan. The logic is quite simple: the healthier and more independent our senior members are, the better off our society will be.

How Can Ajinomoto Co. Help?

In the absence of other diseases, one of the biggest physical problems faced by the elderly is called “sarcopenia,” the loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength, which occurs with advancing age. Sarcopenia can lead to a variety of health impairments that are typically associated with the elderly, including mobility disorders and increased risk of falls and fractures⁶.

Overall, Japanese people have been consuming less and less protein every year, and compared to young people, the elderly are less capable of creating new muscle. As a result, Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has published targets for the consumption of protein across age groups⁶.

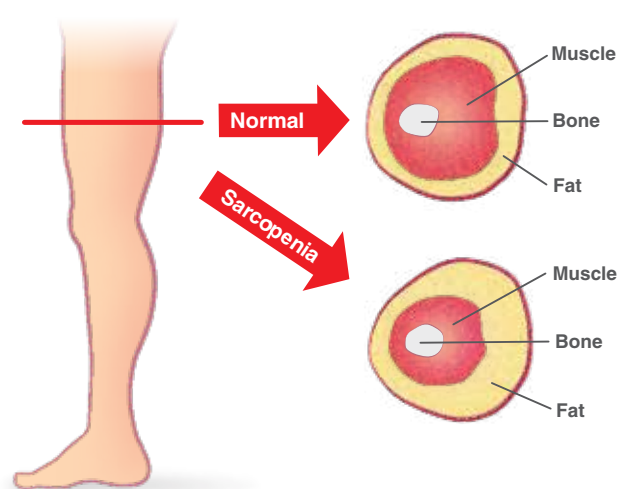
Decrease in Protein Intake (Left) and Low Protein Intake Associated with a Significant Loss of Muscle (Right)



Health Problems Associated with Sarcopenia

- Mobility disorders
- Increased risk of falls and fractures
- Impaired ability to perform activities of daily living
- Loss of independence
- Increased risk of death

Sarcopenia

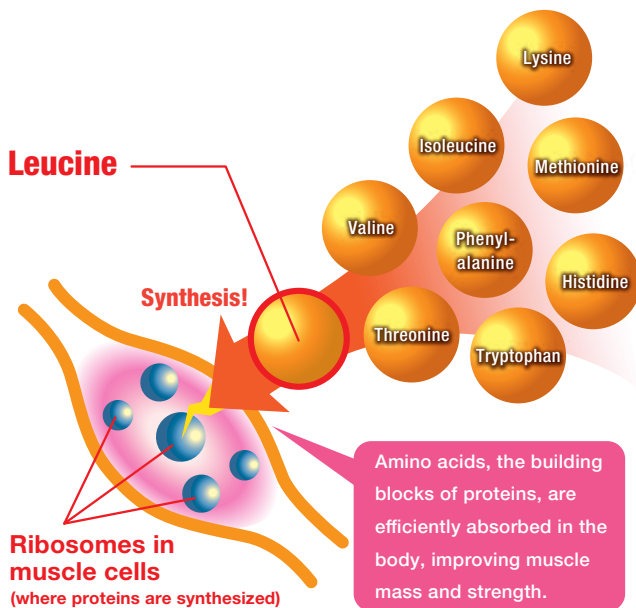


Eat Well, Live Well.



Proper nutrition is clearly a crucial factor that leads to good health. And amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins, are a key component of sufficient and balanced nutrition. As one of the world's foremost companies in the research and production of amino acids, Ajinomoto Co. is in a natural position to make a positive impact in this area. That's why we are actively engaged in promoting healthy longevity in Japan through a variety of community programs, and through our "Amino L40" product.

■ Leucine Promotes Muscle Protein Synthesis

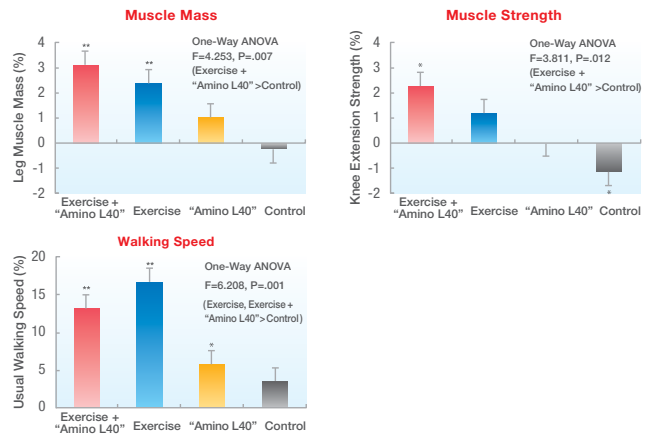


"Amino L40" is a proprietary blend of 9 essential amino acids (including L-Leucine 40%) that are vital to muscle protein synthesis⁶. Ajinomoto Co. provides this product to other companies in the food and nutrition area as a food ingredient. Clinical trials show that seniors who take this supplement and perform moderate exercise (60 minutes twice per week) have significantly higher increase in leg muscle mass, muscle strength, and walking speed than seniors who don't take the supplement and don't exercise⁶.

■ Logo Mark Displayed on the Package of Products Using "Amino L40" as a Food Ingredient



■ Changes in Muscle Mass, Strength, and Walking Speed



** : p < 0.01, * : p < 0.05 in comparing the pre- and post- intervention changes Kim et al. J Am Geriatr Soc 2012

In addition to using "Amino L40" in its own nutritional supplements, for years Ajinomoto Co. has been actively partnering with numerous other companies in Japan to bring the benefits of "Amino L40" to the general public through food products. These partnerships have yielded drink mixes, curry, miso soup, marshmallows, and more. And we are always seeking for more potential partners that will cooperate to integrate the benefits of amino acids with food products⁶.

Tomorrow the World

Japan is facing an "elderly boom" today, but what about tomorrow? As the average life expectancy grows throughout the world, many countries may face a similar challenge—helping millions and millions of elderly individuals to remain as healthy and as independent as possible.

Ajinomoto Co. is proud to be on the forefront of promoting a "healthy lifespan" in Japan, but we are not satisfied to stop there. Because we are committed to helping societies all around the world to live not only longer, but better lives.

(Note) "Amino L40" is currently marketed in Japan and the United States, and we are under considering other international opportunities based on local laws and regulations.



About Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Ajinomoto Co. is a global manufacturer of high-quality seasonings, processed foods, beverages, amino acids, pharmaceuticals and specialty chemicals. For many decades Ajinomoto Co. has contributed to food culture and human health through wide-ranging application of amino acid technologies. Today, the company is becoming increasingly involved with solutions for improved food resources, human health and global sustainability. Founded in 1909 and now operating in 30 countries and regions, Ajinomoto Co. had net sales of JPY 1,091.1 billion (USD 10.07 billion) in fiscal 2016. For more about Ajinomoto Co. (TYO : 2802), visit www.ajinomoto.com.

For further information or references and literature support of any information contained in this newsletter, please contact Ajinomoto Co., Inc. Global Communications Department: ajigcd_newsletter@ajinomoto.com.

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