Food Facts: Dairy

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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Food Facts: Dairy

Dairy Council of South Dakota
and
South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service
Food Facts: Dairy

When did you turn 20? Yesterday? Twenty years ago?

The day you left your teens behind, you might have thought you could leave milk behind, too. If so, that was a mistake!

Dairy products: What's in them for you?

Doctors and nutritionists now know that milk and dairy products contain many nutrients which are necessary for people of all ages. They are good sources of calcium, protein, vitamin A, riboflavin, and phosphorus. Calcium, of course, is essential for the growth and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth. Our bones contain 99% of the calcium in our bodies. The remaining 1% helps perform several vital functions. Nerve cells and muscles (including your heart) depend on calcium. Calcium is also needed for normal clotting of blood.

The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for calcium is 800 milligrams. But on any given day, 50-75% of American women consume less than 600 milligrams.

If you aren't drinking at least 2 cups of milk, eating 3 ounces of cheese, eating 2 cups of yogurt, or a combination of these a day, you could be headed for trouble.

That trouble is osteoporosis, a painful, crippling disease that shows up in later life. It's brought on by a lifetime of inattention to the calcium needs of your body.

The best source of calcium is milk or milk products. If you choose, however, to forego two 8-ounce glasses of milk a day, you would have to eat:

- 58 tablespoons of peanut butter, 70 apples,
- 26 slices of whole wheat bread, or 194 frankfurters

to get the same amount of calcium as in those two glasses of milk.

If you are lactose intolerant, you may be able to eat cultured dairy products (yogurt, buttermilk, cottage cheese, and cheese) instead of milk. Lactose has been broken down in the processing of these products, allowing your body to digest them without problems.

Osteoporosis: The silentcripper

If osteoporosis develops, you have no warning. There are no symptoms, though the disease may have been building up for 20 years or so.

The body of every person—man, women, child, and teenager—is constantly building new bone and just as constantly losing bone all life long. (Keep in mind that calcium is used to build bones.) We all know that bone growth is extremely important in young people. But bone building must equal bone loss for all people, adults as well as children.

Osteoporosis (caused by a lack of calcium) contributes to at least 150,000 hip fractures a year in the U.S. Women are four times more likely to suffer from the disease than men. Twenty-five percent of all 80-year-old women have had fractures and another 20% have suffered vertebral collapses.

Why women so often?

At about age 45 women lose the special protection of estrogen when they encounter menopause. Estrogen is a hormone which helps regulate the bone building and bone loss balance. If they have also gotten into the habit of eating less high-calcium foods, as is so common, their bodies do not form new bone as fast as it is lost.

Ideas: How to increase calcium in the diet

NFDM. Non-fat dry milk is just as nutritious as skim milk and can save you money. Add it to many of your favorite recipes to boost the nutritional value of the product.

Use powdered milk in baking. Substitute ¼ cup powdered milk and ¾ cup water for each cup of milk in the recipe. In breads, adding 2 tablespoons powdered milk for each cup of flour increases nutrients and improves flavor and texture. In cookies, reduce the sugar content by one third and replace with an equal amount of powdered milk, saving calories and adding calcium.

Yogurt. Yogurt is made by adding a bacterium to milk. This produces a custard-like dairy product with a tangy flavor. Substitute yogurt for mayonnaise or salad dressing in many recipes and dips. Yogurt has only 9 calories per tablespoon while mayonnaise has 100 calories per tablespoon.

Green goddess dressing

½ cup 2% low-fat cottage cheese
1 tablespoon green goddess-style dry salad dressing mix
1 cup (8 oz) plain yogurt
Beat cottage cheese and dressing mix until smooth or blend in blender.

Fold in yogurt. Chill to blend flavors. 11 calories per tablespoon (commercial brands are 75 calories per tablespoon).

Thousand island dressing

¼ cup catsup
2 tablespoons pickle relish
1 hard cooked egg, finely chopped
1 teaspoon grated onion
1 cup (8 oz) plain yogurt
Fold other ingredients into yogurt. Cover and chill to blend flavors. 14 calories per tablespoon (commercial brands are 80 calories per tablespoon).
Cheese. Cheese is “concentrated nutrition,” since 10 pounds (5 quarts) of milk are needed to produce 1 pound of cheese.

Aged Cheddar, Monterey Jack and Swiss cheeses have been shown to protect teeth against acids in the mouth, the acids which break down tooth enamel and lead to dental caries.

Add ½ cup shredded cheese for every cup of flour in bread, biscuit, and cornbread recipes.

Add cheese to salads, both fresh and gelatin.

Top vegetables with cheese or a cheese sauce.

Add shredded cheese to meat loaf.

Use as a dessert with fruit.

Special recipes

**Red, white, and blueberry delight**

1 can (15 oz) sweetened, condensed milk
½ cup lemon juice
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel, optional
2 cups plain yogurt
2-3 cups cubed angel food cake
½ cup chopped nuts
1 pint (2 cups) strawberries, sliced
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Combine condensed milk, lemon juice, peel, and yogurt. Mix. Fold in cake and nuts. Pour half of mixture in 8-inch square pan, layer with half of fruit, repeat yogurt and fruit. Freeze until serving. Serves 12. 220 calories per serving (compare to 418 for fruit pie, 310 for chocolate cake of same size).

**Tuna salad**

1 can tuna, drained
½ cup yogurt
¼ cup celery, chopped
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
2 tablespoons onions, diced
2 tablespoons sweet pickles, diced
dash pepper
garlic salt
2 tablespoons sweet pickle juice
½ cup grated cheese

Combine. Serves four. 185 calories per serving.

For more information contact Pat Page, Extension nutritionist, SDSU, or Dairy Council of South Dakota, Brookings, SD 57006.