

# Aging Healthfully Newsletter

Illinois Department on Aging



## June is National Dairy Month

**With nine essential nutrients including calcium, vitamin D and protein, dairy just makes sense when it comes to healthful eating.**

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends **three servings of dairy foods** (e.g. milk, cheese, yogurt) **each day** for Americans 9 years and older.

**Dairy products provide a good and highly absorbable source of calcium, one of several nutrients known for helping to keep our bones and teeth strong!**

Other sources of calcium include salmon, dark leafy greens and fortified soy food products (e.g. tofu, soy beverages) – these non-dairy sources contain varying amounts of absorbable calcium.

**Supplements are another source of calcium. Keep in mind the body is only able to absorb 500mg at a time**, so it is important to spread your calcium intake from food or supplements throughout the day to maximize absorption!

### What you get in 3 - 8oz glasses of dairy per day:

- **Provides roughly 70%** of the recommended daily value (DV) for *calcium* – this is equivalent to 17 cups of raw kale (I wouldn't recommend anyone try to eat that much kale in a day!)
  - 99% of the body's calcium is stored in your bones and teeth
- **Provides approximately 50%** of the recommended daily value for *protein*
  - Helps to build/repair cells and body tissues such as skin, hair, muscle & bones.
  - Assists with immune response, fluid balance, transport and storage of nutrients.
- **Provides approximately 140%** of the recommended daily value for *vitamin B12*
  - Needed for proper neurological function, DNA synthesis, red blood cell formation (helps to prevent anemia).
- **Provides approximately 45%** of the recommended daily value for *vitamin D*
  - Helps maintain proper calcium and phosphorus levels in the body for bone growth/remodeling.
  - Inadequate vitamin D can lead to thin, brittle bones and osteoporosis.
- **Also provides** 60% DV for phosphorus, 100% DV for riboflavin (vitamin B2), 50% DV for pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), 45% DV for vitamin A and 35% DV for niacin (vitamin B3).

### What counts as a one-cup equivalent of milk?

- 1 cup fat-free, low-fat or 2% milk or 1 cup fat-free, low-fat yogurt
- 2 cups cottage cheese, reduced-fat or low-fat
- 1 ½ ounces natural cheese or 2 ounces processed cheese
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup calcium fortified orange juice (milk alternative)
- 3oz canned sardines with bones (milk alternative)
- 8 ounces tofu, processed with calcium salt (milk alternative)



### Good Nutrition Can Help Prevent or Reduce the Effects of Osteoporosis

It is just as important for older adults as it is for young growing children to include dairy foods as part of a healthy diet.

Bone mass declines with age and women are much more likely to develop osteoporosis than men. Approximately 80% of Americans with osteoporosis are women! Older adults also absorb less vitamin D, which impacts bone health.

### **Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by:**

- Low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue
- Thin fragile bones that lead to bone fractures
- Compaction of bone – loss of height with aging
- Shortening or hunching of the spine – also known as dowager’s hump

### Tips to reduce your risk of bone loss:

- **Adequate calcium and vitamin D** intake may slow the progression or prevent this disease (ideally from food first and if necessary from supplements).
- **Diets high in fruits and vegetables are associated with improved bone health**
  - Especially broccoli, kale, garbanzo beans, edamame, and calcium fortified orange juice and soy-based products like tofu, tempeh and soy beverages.
- **Adequate magnesium intake** – found in foods such as nuts, seeds, beans and spinach can help maintain proper blood calcium levels.
- **You are never too old to get active, become stronger and improve your health!**
  - Increase weight-bearing exercises such as walking, jogging, weight lifting and dancing. **These exercises put a positive “stress” on the bones, which helps them to build stronger by increasing bone mass.**
- **Quit smoking** or reduce your tobacco consumption to help reduce your risk for osteoporosis. Smoking has been shown to weaken bones.
- **Limit alcohol consumption** as it interferes with the body’s calcium balance and vitamin D production, which is essential for calcium absorption.

## **Having Lactose Intolerance Does Not Mean a Life Without Dairy**

In the United States, 1 out of every 10 adults report having symptoms related to lactose intolerance (through self-diagnosis).

For those that experience the not so lovely symptoms such as bloating, abdominal pain, gas and/or diarrhea, it makes sense that many choose to avoid dairy products altogether.

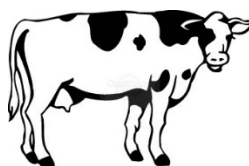
**Here are some of the basics on lactose intolerance**, but as always it is best to consult your primary care doctor for a proper diagnosis.

- **Lactose is a naturally occurring sugar found in milk** and other dairy foods derived from milk such as yogurt, sour cream and ice cream.
- **Those with lactose intolerance have an insufficient amount of lactase enzymes.** Lactase enzymes help to break down lactose into a digestible form, which helps to prevent the unpleasant symptoms mentioned above.
- **As infants, almost everyone is born with sufficient lactase enzymes** to breakdown and digest lactose! For most individuals, the amount of lactase enzymes in the body peaks around pre-teen and teenage years and then continues to decline with age.
- **The degree of lactose intolerance varies from person to person – some individuals can tolerate small amounts of lactose at a time.** It's important to find out what works best for you and what your body can tolerate!
  - For example, **many people can tolerate up to 12 grams of lactose** (the amount in an 8-ounce serving of milk) **in one sitting.**

The good news is...**there are many dairy products that contain low amounts or no lactose that can still be enjoyed even if you have lactose intolerance!**

### **Dairy foods that have low amounts or no lactose:**

- **Lactose-free cow's milk** – cow's milk with all the nutrients, just without the lactose!
- **Hard natural cheeses** – such as cheddar, swiss & parmesan contain < 1 gram of lactose
- **Ricotta cheese** – contains small amounts of lactose
- **Cream & cream cheese** – contain < 1 gram of lactose
- **Yogurt** (low-fat, plain) – does contain about 12 grams of lactose, however the live and active cultures (probiotics) help digest lactose, making it easier for people to tolerate
- **Greek Yogurt** (low-fat, plain) – contains less lactose (6-8 grams) than regular due to how it is strained
- **Lactose-free varieties of yogurt, Greek yogurt and ice cream** – 0 grams lactose



## Probiotics for a Healthy Gut

You have likely heard of the term *probiotics* before... Probiotics are considered the “good” bacteria or live cultures like the natural bacteria present in your gut or intestines.

**Bacteria is traditionally thought of as “bad,” but this is NOT the case with probiotics.** A healthy gut contains the proper balance of good bacteria, which can help boost immunity and overall health.

**Ask your doctor if you would benefit from taking a probiotic supplement if you do not regularly consume foods rich in probiotics** (see food sources below). There are many different types of “good” bacteria and they target different areas of the body.

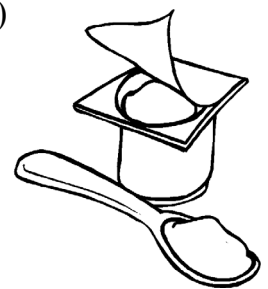
**Current research on probiotics suggests a range of health benefits** including reducing the risk of antibiotic associated diarrhea when taking antibiotics prescribed for a bacterial infection and helping to manage the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.

### Food Sources of Probiotics:

- **Fermented dairy products** that contain live cultures (e.g. lactobacilli and bifidobacterial):
  - **Yogurt** (must say “contains live active cultures”)
  - **Kefir** (a fermented milk probiotic drink)
  - **Aged cheeses** - gouda, gruyere, mozzarella and cottage cheese
- **Fermented non-dairy products:**
  - **Kimchi** (fermented cabbage – popular Korean side dish)
  - **Sauerkraut** (fermented finely shredded cabbage – popular European food)
  - **Miso** (Japanese seasoning made from fermented soybeans)
  - **Tempeh** (a fermented soybean product)
  - **Cultured non-dairy yogurts** (such as almond or coconut-based)

### Attachments:

- Milk Nutrients Infographic
- Lactose Intolerance Chart of Common Dairy Foods
- Vegetarian/Vegan Calcium Food Sources
- The Greek Yogurt Swap
- Probiotics
- Prebiotics
- Dairy Farm Bingo (activity)
- Undeniably Dairy Trivia (activity)
- June recipes – Watermelon & Feta salad; Dry Ranch Dressing Powder/Dip Mix



### References:

- <https://www.eatright.org/food/vitamins-and-supplements/nutrient-rich-foods/prebiotics-and-probiotics-creating-a-healthier-you>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/what-are-probiotics/art-20232589>
- <https://www.midwestdairy.com/dairy-resource-center/educator-resources/>
- <https://www.nationaldairycouncil.org>
- <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/calcium-and-milk/calcium-full-story/#where>

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