

Improve Diet Quality with 3 Daily Servings of Dairy



Dairy Foods in Dietary Patterns

Milk Group* foods are a core part of healthy dietary patterns recommended by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)¹. The DGA recommends 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products daily for those 9 years or older, 2.5 servings for those 4-8 years old, and 2 servings for those 2-3 years old¹. Americans are currently consuming about 2 dairy servings per day on average (1.8)², and adding one more can help meet DGA recommendations.

The DGA recommends choosing foods that provide more potassium, dietary fiber, calcium and vitamin D, identified as nutrients of concern in Americans¹. These foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and milk and milk products. Dairy foods (milk, cheese and yogurt) are a substantial contributor of many nutrients important for good health in the diets of Americans 2 years and older, including about half of the calcium and more than half of the vitamin D². Milk is the top food source in the U.S. diet of calcium, potassium and vitamin D². The DGA also notes "it is especially important to establish the habit of drinking milk in young children, as those who consume milk at an early age are more likely to do so as adults."¹

* USDA's Food Patterns define Milk Group foods to include a wide range of products: All milks, including lactose-free and lactose-reduced products; fortified soy beverages; yogurts; frozen yogurts; dairy desserts; and cheeses. Most choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Cream, sour cream and cream cheese are not included due to their low calcium content. NOTE: While fortified soy beverages are considered part of the Milk Group, they do not naturally contain all of the nutrients found in fluid milk and require fortification to mimic milk's nutrient package.

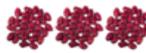
Relationship Between Dairy and Health

Dairy food consumption is associated with overall diet quality and nutrient adequacy^{3,4,5}, and removing dairy foods from the diet can have a negative impact on nutrient intake⁶. Consuming 3 daily servings of milk, cheese or yogurt is an easy way to get a variety of nutrients important for building strong bones and healthy bodies. According to the DGA, current evidence shows intake of milk and milk products is linked to improved bone health, especially in children and adolescents, and intake of milk and milk products is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and lower blood pressure in adults¹.

The DGA identifies strategies for individuals who are lactose-intolerant to get key dairy nutrients, including trying lactose-free milk, drinking smaller amounts of milk at a time, or trying fortified soy beverages¹. For those who are lactose intolerant, a variety of low-lactose and lactose-free milk products are available.

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Milk Packs a Nutrient Punch

Nutrient	Amount of nutrients found in 3 cups of fat-free milk ⁷ (percent Daily Value ^{**})	Approx. amount of non-dairy food source to get about the same nutrient level ⁷
Calcium	 = 90% DV	 30 cups raw spinach
Potassium	 = 33% DV	 3 small bananas
Phosphorus	 = 74% DV	 3 1/4 cups canned kidney beans
Protein	 = 50% DV	 1/2 chicken breast (95 g)
Vitamin A	 = 30% DV	 6 large hard boiled eggs
Vitamin D	 = 86% DV	 1.5 ounces canned salmon with bone
Vitamin B12	 = 61% DV	 4.5 ounces canned tuna
Riboflavin	 = 79% DV	 1 cup whole almonds
Magnesium	 = 20% DV	 1/2 cup cooked soybeans

Sources:

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- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. 2010. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 23. Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/cgi-bin/nrc/nutrient>

** Daily Values are provided for illustration purposes only.



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