



Dairy

Dairy products are typically derived from cow's milk. Some of the most common dairy products include milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt and butter. Depending on where you live in the world, cow's milk might be a normal part of your everyday diet. In recent years, however, there has been much debate about whether or not we should be consuming dairy.

WHY AVOID DAIRY?

Dairy is considered inflammatory in our bodies and can cause digestive upset, skin conditions (including acne), headaches, fatigue, aching joints and more. Some individuals have worse symptoms than others, especially if they are allergic to lactose or casein, or have other intolerances to dairy.

In general, humans did not evolve by drinking dairy. The nutrient make-up of milk is intended for a growing calf that is destined to become a full-grown cow. To promote this immense growth, milk is filled with a cow's natural hormones and high amounts of protein. These hormones can interfere with our own hormones because our body doesn't recognize them. And cow's milk isn't necessary for us to consume protein - in fact, many people consume too much meat and thus too much protein as it is. Dairy isn't necessary for calcium intake, either. There are a number of other calcium sources that should be included in a healthy diet for us to meet our dietary requirements.

INTOLERANCE OR ALLERGY?

Lactose intolerance is quite common, and chances are you know someone who can't have milk because of it. Lactose is the sugar found in cow's milk, and our body needs an enzyme called lactase to properly break it down. About 65% of the world's population stops producing the enzyme lactase after early childhood. While this statistic varies by region, our bodies did not evolve consuming another animal's milk after we stopped breastfeeding, so losing the ability to digest lactose is natural. Those with true lactose intolerance must eat a lactose-free diet to avoid digestive discomfort.

Some individuals are allergic, not just intolerant, to lactose or casein in milk, causing an immediate immune response and in some cases anaphylactic shock. These individuals are required to avoid milk and milk products altogether.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH CALCIUM?

One of the common reasons to consume dairy is for its calcium content, but it's not the best option. Don't forget that a whole host of fresh vegetables and other foods also contains calcium. The recommended daily intake for calcium varies with gender and age, but for a typical 35-year old 1,000 mg of calcium per day is recommended.

Here's how you can ensure you're consuming enough calcium, without consuming milk:

Serving size	Calcium content* (based on RDA of 1000mg)
Sesame seeds, raw	1 cup = 1404 mg (140%)
Almonds, lightly roasted	1 cup = 457 mg (45.7%)
Collards, cooked	1 cup = 268-357 mg (26-36%)
Teff, uncooked	1 cup = 347 mg (34.7%)
French beans	1 cup = 342 mg (34.2%)



Spinach, cooked	1 cup = 245 mg (24.5%)
Turnip greens, cooked	1 cup = 197 mg (19.7%)
Tempeh	1 cup = 184 mg (18.4%)
Kale, cooked	1 cup = 179 mg (17.9%)
Beet greens, cooked	1 cup = 164 mg (16.4%)
Tahini (sesame seed paste)	1 tbsp = 154 mg (15.4%)
Dandelion greens, cooked	1 cup = 145 mg (14.5%)

**Note these quantities are not suggested servings and are used only to compare calcium content.*

DAIRY-FREE SWAPS

Love yogurt and don't know what to do without it? Here are some great alternatives to your typical dairy products!

Dairy-containing foods and drinks	Non-dairy foods and drinks
Milk or cream	Goat's milk*, soy milk, nut milks (almond, cashew, hemp), coconut milk, rice milk
Ice cream	Fruit sorbet (dairy-free), coconut ice cream, almond ice cream
Cheese	Goat's milk cheese*, soy-based faux cheese, cashew-based faux cheese, nutritional yeast
Yogurt	Goat's milk yogurt*, coconut yogurt, soy yogurt, almond or cashew yogurt
Kefir	Water kefir, Goat's milk kefir*, coconut kefir, almond kefir
Butter	Ghee**, coconut oil, olive oil
Sour creams, spreads	Avocado, tahini, coconut butter

*Goat's milk is derived from goats, not cows. Although goat's milk contains lactose, some who are lactose intolerant or sensitive to cow's milk can consume goat's milk without a reaction.

**Ghee is clarified butter with a much higher fat content and considered lactose-free, casein-free and whey-free; however, because it is still dairy-derived, avoid it if you have a dairy allergy.

SOURCES:

"Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet: Calcium." *National Institutes of Health: Office of Dietary Supplements*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 17 Nov. 2016. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. <<https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Calcium-HealthProfessional/>>.

"USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Release 28: Calcium, Ca (mg)." *National Institutes of Health: Office of Dietary Supplements*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 19 October 2015. Web. 16 March 2017. <<https://ods.od.nih.gov/pubs/usdandb/Calcium-Content.pdf>>.