

Milk: Good or Bad? Benefits of Drinking Milk

When we talk about the key staples of an everyday diet, the health benefits of milk and other dairy products are often overlooked. There are more and more 'dairy-free' alternatives than ever on the market. In fact, between 2009 and 2015, sales of dairy-free products more than doubled in the US.

While some of these sales can be accounted for by those with lactose intolerance or vegans, the majority are consumers who may have been fooled by recent speculation that dairy products might be 'unhealthy' or not a necessary part of our daily diet. Yet, the reality couldn't be further from the truth. There are plenty of reasons that make milk products an excellent addition to your diet. Let's discover the potential health benefits of milk, the vitamins it contains, and tackle some of the most prominent myths about dairy products.

What Are the Health Benefits of Milk?

Of course, the first health benefit stems from the amount of calcium in milk. Calcium is crucial in helping build bones and teeth, as well as in supporting the body with a variety of functions (e.g. muscle contractions and preventing cramps).

So, how much calcium is in a glass of milk and does it provide the body with enough of this essential mineral? It's estimated that most cups of semi-skimmed milk contain 300mg of calcium — just under a third of the recommended daily requirement of 1000mg for men and women in the US. Calcium works better with a healthy dose of Vitamin D. While most milk products don't naturally contain this, many are now reinforced with Vitamin D — a crucial vitamin for bone health that protects against many diseases.

Other Nutrients in Milk

Although calcium is what we often associate with milk, it contains many other vital vitamin and minerals in a single glass. Milk is a great source of potassium — which many adults are now deficient in

(especially those who consume sodium-rich foods). Potassium helps the nervous system, muscles, and may even reduce blood pressure.

Milk also contains a good amount of phosphorus, a mineral that supports our

kidneys and bones and helps repair body tissues and cells. Milk is often fortified with vitamin A, a powerful antioxidant, and some B vitamins. Alongside these key nutrients, milk is also a good source of fat and protein.

In other words, it's an all-around source of great nutrition: a meal in a glass.

**Does Milk
Make Your
Bones**

Stronger?

Given the high amount of calcium in milk products, the assumption is that milk makes our bones stronger. While scientists undoubtedly agree that milk is an excellent calcium

source, studies show mixed results as to its direct impact on strengthening our bones.

One study looked at milk consumption in teenagers and suggested teenage males who drank more mil actually had an

increased risk of experiencing fractures. Interestingly, these results did not apply to the female cohort.

Many studies consider milk a very important factor in higher bone density and good health. Therefore, it seems that while we

can't promise that a glass of milk a day will prevent osteoporosis or fractures, there's no denying that it can support your bones and teeth in their development.

Is Milk Good for Diabetics?

**Milk can be a very
beneficial part of the
diet of somebody
dealing with diabetes
— as long as they avoid
milk products with**

added sugar (e.g. milkshakes or sweetened dairy-based drinks). Since, diabetics may be more prone to fractures, the calcium and Vitamin D in milk products can support their bone development.

Additionally, milk and

other dairy products are low GI (or glycemic index) foods, which means these products increase blood sugar at a relatively low rate after consumption. Milk protein itself also slows down stomach emptying, which makes it a useful addition to

your evening meal.

What's the Best Way to Add Milk to Your Diet?

**If you've been avoiding
milk previously, you
may wish to introduce**

it slowly back into your diet — adding a few spoonfuls of yogurt in your granola or making 50/50 smoothies (i.e. half with a dairy alternative and half with milk).

Finally, some people may find that cow's milk is difficult for

them to digest or tolerate. If this is the case, try turning to other types of milk before reaching instantly for plant-based alternatives. For example, you might wish to try camel milk, which has many of the vitamins and minerals

found in cow's milk — along with higher levels of vitamin B and vitamin C.

It's recommended that three servings of milk or other dairy products is optimal for good health. However, this doesn't have to mean three glasses of milk,

you may want to experiment with tasty camel milk recipes such as dairy-packed smoothies or camel milk ice cream.

Where do you stand on the dairy debate? Let us know below!