

Dairy products can assist weight loss

by Dr John Briffa on 26 July 2011 in [Exercise and Activity](#), [Healthy Eating](#), [Weight Loss](#), [Women's Health](#)

In general terms, I believe in eating a diet based on natural, unprocessed foods that are as 'primal' as possible. This means eating a diet in which core foods including (where desired) meat, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables. I strongly oppose the idea that grains should be a staple in the diet, at least in part because of how disruptive they tend to be to blood sugar and insulin levels, and how this predisposes to all manner of ills including weight gain, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Another relatively recent addition to the human diet are dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt. These foods can't really be described as 'primal', in my view, though I've tended to have a relatively relaxed attitude to the consumption of at least some forms of dairy products. One thing going for some of them is that they are relatively rich in protein and fat, which in some ways emulates the nutritional make-up of primal foods such as meat and eggs.

Dairy products do induce insulin secretion, which could cause fat deposition. But their protein content will also induce the secretion of the hormone glucagon. One of glucagon's main effects is to stimulate the conversion of triglyceride (the form fat is stored in the fat cells) into its constituent molecules, thereby facilitating lipolysis (fat breakdown). Also, unlike insulin, glucagon does not stimulate the uptake of sugar into the body's cells. This helps restrict the amount of glucose available for the production of glycerol, which is required for the making of triglyceride, and the 'fixing' of fat in the fat cells. In other words, while protein increases insulin secretion, the rise in glucagon that comes at the same time mitigates the fat-forming effects of insulin.

Another factor that mitigates the insulin-provoking effects of dairy products relates to their calcium content. Consumption of calcium has been shown to paradoxically lower calcium level within fat cells, and this accelerates lipolysis [1].

There is considerable evidence linking higher intakes of calcium and dairy products with reduced body fatness [2]. It has been suggested that not just calcium, but other chemical constituents in dairy products somehow assist fat loss. There is evidence that supplementing the diet with dairy products (yoghurt) can enhance fat loss, including abdominal fat [3,4].

In light of this, I was interested to read a recently published study in which diets containing different amounts of protein and dairy products were tested in a group of overweight and obese women [5]. All women engaged in aerobic and/or resistance exercise, and ate a diet reduced in calories. The women were randomised to eat one of three diets:

1. High protein, high dairy (30 per cent of calories from protein, 15 per cent from dairy)
2. Adequate protein, medium dairy (15 per cent of calories from protein, 7.5 per cent from dairy)
3. Adequate protein, low dairy (15 per cent of calories from protein, < 2 per cent from dairy)

The trial lasted a total of 16 weeks.

All groups lost weight and body fat, but there were differences between the groups. Here are the highlights:

- Fat loss was greater with diet 1 than diets 2 and 3.
- Those eating diet 1 saw an increase in lean mass (e.g. muscle), while those eating diet 2 maintained lean mass and those eating diet 3 lost lean mass.
- Those eating diet 1 lost more 'visceral' fat than those eating diet 2 (visceral fat is fat found in and around the abdominal organs and is particularly strongly linked with ill-health).
- Loss of visceral fat was correlated with calcium and protein intakes – in other words, higher intakes of calcium and/or protein were associated with greater losses of visceral fat.

The authors of the study concluded that:

"Therefore, diet- and exercise-induced weight loss with higher protein and increased dairy product intakes promotes more favorable body composition changes in women characterized by greater total and visceral fat loss and lean mass gain."

One of the major downsides to dairy, on the other hand, is that it's a quite-common cause of food sensitivity reactions. My experience in practice is that pasteurised milk is the worse offender here, and I advocate raw dairy products (where available) if at all possible as these do seem to be much better tolerated.

I also prefer yoghurt as food over milk. I've found this to be much better tolerated, and this might have something to do with the fermentation of milk (as well as other foods) partially digests milk proteins and, to a degree, lactose, making it more digestible and less problematic in theory. If yoghurt is eaten, I recommend that this be in its full-fat form. A bowl of Greek yoghurt with some nuts and berries makes a good breakfast option for those seeking something nourishing and satisfying in the morning, and can be eaten safe in the knowledge that its likely to assist weight control over time.

References:

1. Zemel MB, et al. Regulation of adiposity by dietary calcium. *FASEB Journal* 2000;14:1132-1138
2. Teegarden D. Calcium intake and reduction of fat mass. *J Nutr* 2003;133:249S–251S
3. Zemel MB, et al. Dairy augmentation of total and central fat loss in obese subjects. *Int J Obes (Lond)*. 2005;29(4):391-7
4. Zemel MB, et al. Effects of calcium and dairy on body composition and weight loss in African-American adults. *Obesity Research* 2005;13(7):1218-25
5. Josse AR Increased Consumption of Dairy Foods and Protein during Diet- and Exercise-Induced Weight Loss Promotes Fat Mass Loss and Lean Mass Gain in Overweight and Obese Premenopausal Women. *J Nutr*. 2011 Jul 20. [Epub ahead of print]



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8 Responses to *Dairy products can assist weight loss*



Robert 26 July 2011 at 7:52 pm #

Dr. Briffa,

You didn't mention cheese and butter, two of my favorite things!

There are plenty of cheeses made with raw milk if you search them out.

Also, since butter is mostly the fat from milk, may it be one of the better dairy products to add to your diet?

Love your insights, thank Doc!

Robert

REPLY



sam 27 July 2011 at 12:14 am #

There is absolutely no reason to consume dairy products, especially milk from another species.

Dairy also is rich in opioids which are addictive, along with grains, beans and roots and fat. (fruits and vegetables contain no opioids).

Humans are naturally frugivorous, I have been reading the works of Dr Shelton etc.

Dairy is also very, very acid forming, which in turn leads to calcium leaching from the bones or eessentially urinating your bones down the toliet.

DAIRY PRODUCTS ALSO RAISE IGF-1 (LOOK IT UP) ...Also meat does too 😊

REPLY



jehane 27 July 2011 at 1:59 am #

Although dairy products may be OK for many, as a severely obese woman with PCOS, I've found that dairy stops my weight loss completely and also worsens other PCOS symptoms such as acne. I suspect this may be due to the igf-1 in dairy and would suggest that those with PCOS consider limiting their dairy intake or stopping dairy completely.

REPLY



Xenia 29 July 2011 at 4:49 pm #

Great article, Dr. Briffa, as always!

In response to some of the readers' comments I would like to point out the following:

1. There is dairy and there is dairy. Eat raw organic dairy only and you will have no such problems as described. (In PCOS, your hormonal balance is off as it is, and ingesting dead cooked proteins full of growth hormones, pesticide residues (pesticides re estrogens!), vaccine residues, dead bacteria, antibiotics and artificial fertilizers from the cows' unnatural feeds certainly won't help).
2. Most people who have problems with milk have usually no problems with fermented dairy products like kefir, sour milk etc.
3. Low fat milk, skimmed milk and artificially "enriched" milk products are not food.
4. A ot of people fare way better on full fat cream than on milk (one of the proponents is Dr. Barry Groves from UK, from the website <http://www.second-Opinions.co.uk>)
5. Studies have proven that calories from butter are turned directly into energy (due to the way how MCT – medium-chain triglycerides – behave in the body) and therefore do not contribute to accumulating body fat.
6. If dairy is addictive, then fruit is much more so, due to the unnaturally high sugar content since the fruit that we know today has little to do with fruit found in Nature to which our genes have been adapted to.

REPLY



moira phillips 29 July 2011 at 5:36 pm #

I had breast cancer 12 years ago. Subsequently found myself in a clinical trial for two oestrogen reducing drugs. I found the side effects very frightening and afer three years I left the trial – two years early and against advice. I looked around for other ways to protect myself. Top of the list was Dr Jane Plant's book 'Your Life in Your Hands' in which she recounts her experiences with breast cancer over a number of years, ultimately leading to a very poor prognosis indeed. She then looked at the epidemiological evidence, found that in parts of China breast cancer was unknown and that in those areas dairy products were not eaten at all. She accordingly gave up dairy and her complete and lasting recovery was impressive. I subsequently followed her diet in the 'Plant programme' and I attribute my survival to her work.

REPLY



Joseph Putnoki 31 July 2011 at 1:02 am #

Spot on AGAIN Dr John! While I newer liked milk from age 9 months on I liked fermented milk we called "sour milk" and in the years between 1937-1956 the living soil was not killed yet only on the way,- by introduction of chemical fertilizers but not yet artificial feed for livestock which was free range. Saving my life escaped Hungary after our '56 uprising were brutally crushed I ended up in Australia and 2 decades later became progressively aware of the deterioration, ignorance and corruption of industry and regulatory, even the Australia's National Science Agency (CSIRO) cotowing to industry demands I ended up short of despairing. As I kept educating myself formally and as an autodidact I came

to understand the value both the sprouting of seeds and legumes and the fermented unadulterated milk products. While these were not part of our ancestors' Paleolithic diet, newer discoveries confirms their health value. I stress the importance of the animals being free-range grazing on uncontaminated and fertile pastures.

Be we!
joseph.

REPLY

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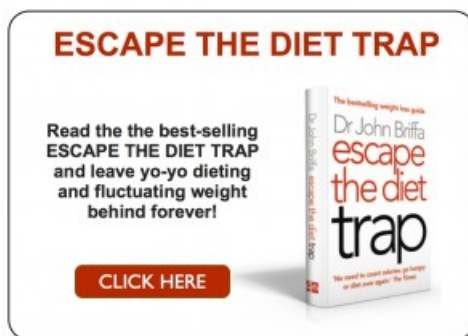
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Eliminating dairy can help with weight loss. Milk, plain yogurt, and other unsweetened dairy products contain lactose, a natural sugar, while other dairy products may contain added sugar. If you're trying to lose stubborn belly fat, eliminating all sugar can really help. While weight loss wasn't a personal health goal for me, I'm now day 4 of no sugar whatsoever. 4. Thyroid. Dairy products are mucus-forming and the protein in dairy has been found to

increase inflammation in vital parts of the body such as the thyroid gland and digestive tract. Since cutting dairy, I've noticed improvements in Dairy Products Beat Calcium for Weight Loss. In the study, researchers compared the effects of three different calorie-restricted diets on weight loss in 32 obese adults. Each of the participants reduced their daily calorie intake by about 500 calories per day for 24 weeks and were divided into three groups: High-dairy. Total calcium intake of 1,200-1,300 milligrams per day from three to four servings of dairy foods, specifically milk, hard cheese, and yogurt. High-calcium supplemented/low-dairy. Total calcium intake of 1,200-1,300 milligrams per day made up of no more than one serving of dair... You can enjoy full-fat dairy products without worrying about weight gain. Research shows the nutrients in dairy fat can help keep you lean. Many individuals still remain skeptical about dairy products and believe consuming them comes with negative health effects. Can you imagine a life without real cheese, yogurt, or whole milk? We have been brainwashed to believe these types of full-fat dairy foods contribute to weight gain and obesity. Low-fat and non-fat versions and other alternative options like soy, rice, and almond milk have taken the place of the real deal. Are these choices any better? According to more recent studies, eating full-fat dairy may actually keep you thin. Are dairy products healthy? While good sources of calcium, protein, and vitamin D, lower-fat versions is are probably better for overall health. Dairy products as a source of calcium and protein. Dairy products like milk, yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese, are good sources of calcium, which helps maintain bone density and reduces the risk of fractures. Adults up to age 50 need 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium per day. Women older than 50 and men older than 70 need 1,200 mg. "Despite the push by the US dairy industry to promote dairy products, especially milk, as a weight-loss tool, research hasn't supported that except when also restricting calories," says Malik. The bottom line. When it comes to overall health benefits, it seems that dairy is neither a hero nor a villain.