



Dairy for life



Dairy – A Five Food Group Food

Dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt are considered to be five food group foods as outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Five food group foods are those which are recommended for daily consumption in order to help achieve optimal nutrient intake. Other dairy-based products such as butter or ice cream generally do not contain all the key dairy nutrition goodness and are therefore not considered five food group foods.

Five food group dairy foods are highly nutritious with multiple health benefits, and are an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. They are a natural source of energy and high quality protein, carbohydrate (lactose) and fat. Dairy products are also naturally rich in essential nutrients, with minerals such as calcium, potassium, and phosphorus, as well as essential vitamins. The package of nutrients that dairy foods contain, provide important benefits for multiple health outcomes.

What is a serve of dairy?

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating recommends milk, yoghurt and cheese, mostly reduced fat.

A serve of dairy:

- 1 cup (250 mL) fresh, UHT long life, reconstituted powdered milk or buttermilk
- ½ cup (120 mL) evaporated milk
- 2 slices (40 g) of hard cheese, such as cheddar
- ½ cup (120 g) ricotta cheese
- ¾ cup (200 g) yoghurt

How much dairy do we need?

Serves	Males	Females
1-2 years	1-1.5	1-1.5
2-3 years	1.5	1.5
4-8 years	2	1.5
9-11 years	2.5	3
12-13 years	3.5	3.5
14-18 years	3.5	3.5
19-50 years	2.5	2.5
51-70 years	2.5	4
70+ years	3.5	4
Pregnant	N/A	3.5
Breastfeeding	-	4

Nutrients found in milk

Core nutrients found in dairy		Other nutrients found in dairy	
Protein	Supports growth and maintenance of muscle	Carbohydrates	The body's preferred source of energy
Calcium	Contributes to development and maintenance of bone	Fat	Rich source of energy, carrier of fat soluble vitamins
Potassium	A principle electrolyte	Magnesium	Supports nerve and muscle function
Phosphorus	Works with calcium to support strong bones	Zinc	Supports a healthy immune system
Riboflavin	Helps release energy from food	Iodine	Supports brain development
Vitamin A	Supports healthy skin and eyes	Thiamin	Helps convert carbohydrate to energy
Vitamin B12	Supports neurological function	Niacin	Supports energy metabolism
		Vitamin B6	Supports energy metabolism
		Folate	Supports formation of red blood cells
		Vitamin D	Helps with the absorption of calcium

Dairy and bone health

Calcium, along with other nutrients found in dairy, such as protein, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus and vitamin D have been proven to be important for growth and development of healthy bones.⁽¹⁾ As well as high quality protein, milk and dairy foods provide both calcium and phosphorus in a ratio that is optimal for skeletal growth and development. High calcium intake, especially from dairy foods, along with adequate vitamin D, has been shown to maximise the potential for peak bone mass.⁽¹⁾

Dairy across the lifespan

Good nutrition during the early years is important for the healthy growth and development of children. Milk is an excellent source of energy, high quality protein and contains a number of essential nutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin and vitamin B12 critical for growth and development, and immune function. Higher intakes of animal-based foods such as milk and dairy products have been associated with better growth, micronutrient status, cognitive performance and motor development in children.⁽²⁾

Dairy products naturally contain essential vitamins along with minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and potassium as well as high quality protein, that have a specific role in normal functioning of the muscles and bones throughout life. In a large population of older women (70-80 years) increased dairy intake was associated with greater whole body lean mass, skeletal muscle mass, grip strength and reduced self-reported falls.⁽³⁾ Dairy intake is therefore an important consideration for ensuring maintenance of mobility in an ageing population.

Dairy and body composition

As part of a healthy, balanced diet, a growing body of evidence has shown a beneficial effect of dairy foods on body weight and fat loss.⁽¹⁾ In addition to reduced fat dairy products, recent studies have found positive associations between the consumption of whole fat dairy foods, including whole fat milk, cheese, yoghurt, cream, and butter and a decreased risk of abdominal fat.⁽⁴⁾

Meanwhile, another study demonstrated that increasing dairy consumption to recommended daily intake levels in adults who do not follow a calorie-restricted diet had a small effect on weight loss, as well as a decrease in fat mass and waist circumference, and an increase in lean body mass.⁽⁵⁾

Tips to increase your dairy intake ⁽⁶⁾

- ✓ Grab a latte on your way to work
- ✓ Have a bowl of fruit and yoghurt for breakfast or after a workout
- ✓ Include cheese in a salad or sandwich
- ✓ Dollop natural yoghurt on a jacket potato
- ✓ Try using ricotta cheese in a dip or your favourite pasta recipes
- ✓ Have a warm glass of milk in the evening



References

1. Huth P J, DiRienzo D B & Miller G D (2006) Major Scientific Advances with Dairy Foods in Nutrition and Health. Journal of Dairy Science, 89, 1207-1221.
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4. Holmberg S & Thelin A (2013) High dairy fat intake related to less central obesity: A male cohort study with 12 years' follow-up. Scandinavian journal of primary health care, 31, 89-94.
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6. Dairy Australia. Dairy Foods: How Much is Enough? November 2014 Available: http://dairyhealth.com.au/professionals/dietitians/~/_media/legendairsty/documents/health/fact%20sheets/dairy-foods-how-much-is-enough.pdf

For more ideas on how to include dairy into your diet, visit:

www.dairy.com.au/recipes