

What Dairy Products Offers to Your Health.....

National Dairy Month originally started in 1937 created to promote drinking milk to U.S. consumers as there was a production surplus at the time. The celebration has evolved over time, now celebrated every June throughout the dairy industry to encourage consumers to eat and drink more dairy products. It's a great time to remind consumers of the nutritional benefits of different dairy products including milk, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, and more! Help educate consumers about the growing amount of research showing numerous nutritional benefits associated with consuming dairy products including diabetes prevention, heart health (including hypertension), bone health, sports recovery, weight management, to other health benefits. Eating three daily servings of low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt can help people meet our needs of the 3 out of 4 **under consumed** nutrients essential to current public health concerns—calcium, vitamin D and potassium. Note: the fourth is fiber, which can be found in foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans — all foods that pair well with dairy! Milk provides 13 essential nutrients: protein, phosphorus, calcium, vitamins A and D as well as B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), B5 (pantothenic acid) and B12 (cobalamin), zinc, Selenium, iodine and potassium.

Milk and plant-based milk alternatives can differ nutritionally. Soy beverages fortified with calcium, vitamin A and vitamin D are the only plant-based alternatives with a nutrient content similar enough to milk to be included in the dairy group in the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. While many plant-based milk alternatives have the word "milk" in their name, the nutritional content can vary between the products, and many of them don't have the same amount of protein, calcium and vitamin D or other nutrients as milk. You may select milk alternatives due to food allergies, weight management, personal preference to other health concerns. So, what should you look for when choosing plant-based milk alternatives? The Nutrition Facts label can help you make the best choices for you and your family. "The nutrients you get from plant-based milk alternatives can depend on which plant source is used, the processing methods, and added ingredients, so check the label carefully," said Susan Mayne, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "Has the product been fortified with nutrients such as calcium? How much added sugar is in the product? What is the protein content?"

As a registered dietitian, I recommend low fat or nonfat dairy products, including lactose free, to reap the fabulous nutrient benefits. Happy Dairy Consumption!!

Written by Laurie Zirilli, registered dietitian, contract RD for Oneida County Office for the Aging. Oneida County OFA provides nutrition counseling and education for the aging. Questions about services and programs for older adults and caregivers, including the Senior Nutrition Program, should call Oneida County Office for the Aging at (315) 798-5456.

References: <https://www.usdairy.com>, www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/milk-and-plant-based-milk-alternatives-know-nutrient-difference, www.americandairy.com/health-wellness/benefits-of-dairy

What's in Your Glass?

Choices are great, but they can be overwhelming.

This at-a-glance chart can help you understand what's in your glass.



Vitamins and Minerals¹⁻⁴ (% Daily Value)

Vitamin B12	60%	60%	40%	35%	50%
Iodine	60%	60%	2%	N/A	N/A
Calcium	25%	25%	20%	30%	30%
Riboflavin (B2)	25%	25%	15%	6%	55%
Phosphorus	20%	20%	15%	6%	20%
Pantothenic acid (B5)	20%	20%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Niacin (B3)	15%	15%	4%	<2%	<2%
Vitamin A	15%	15%	15%	10%	25%
Vitamin D	15%	15%	8%	10%	20%
Potassium ⁵	10%	10%	10%	2%	10%
Zinc	10%	10%	6%	4%	2%
Selenium	10%	10%	8%	N/A	N/A

= Naturally occurring nutrients N/A = Nutrition data not available or reported quantitatively

*Source: Circana Group, L.P. Multi-outlets and convenience stores. 52 week-period ending Dec 1, 2024. (Half-gallon dairy milk, unflavored (1%); dairy milk, lactose-free, unflavored (1%); leading almond, soy and oat beverage brands, unflavored; 1-gallon dairy milk, private label, unflavored.)

1. USDA, Agricultural Research Service. FoodData Central, 2019. <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/>. FDC IDs: 746772, 2705389, 1999630, 1999631, 2257046. Accessed December 2024.

2. USDA, Agricultural Research Service. USDA, FDA and ODS-NIH Database for the Iodine Content of Common Foods Release 3.0 (2023).

3. Naturally occurring nutrients based on publicly available product ingredient lists. Accessed July 2023. Lactose-free milk is real dairy milk that has added lactase enzymes to break down lactose. USDA FDC ID 2705389 does not include values for iodine, pantothenic acid and tryptophan (for niacin equivalents) as of December 2024.

4. FDA's Daily Value (DV) for potassium of 4700 mg is based on a 2005 DRI recommendation. In 2019, NASEM updated the DRI to 3400 mg. These values are based on the 2019 DRI of 3400 mg.

