



Dairy Foods

Dairy products have been part of human diets for centuries. Take this mini-quiz and see how much you know about the role of dairy in a healthy diet.

**1. Which of these foods are considered a dairy product?
(Select all that apply).**

- Cow's milk
- Goat's milk
- Greek yogurt
- Kefir
- Butter
- All of the above



2. It's best to choose a non-fat yogurt to save calories.

- True
- False

3. People who are lactose intolerant should avoid all dairy products.

- True
- False

4. Dairy products are unhealthy and should be avoided, especially for those who are concerned about their weight.

- True
- False

Answers on reverse



Answers

1. All of the above

Milk from mammals – including cow, goat, sheep and even buffalo and yak – and the foods made from milk are all considered dairy products. Butter is made from milk or cream; yogurt and kefir are fermented milk products.

2. False

“Nonfat” doesn’t always mean low in calories. In order to make low-fat or non-fat products taste better some manufacturers add large amounts of sugar and fillers.

The healthier choice is a plain yogurt with live active cultures.* To add a little sweetness, mix in chopped fruit, or stir in a drizzle of honey. If you opt for the convenience of yogurt with fruit added, look for a product that lists fruit as one of the first ingredients after milk and active cultures and doesn’t have added sugars such as fructose or fillers like cornstarch.

3. False

Lactose is a natural sugar found in cow’s milk, and when someone is lactose intolerant, it means they can’t digest this sugar easily, resulting in gastrointestinal discomfort such as gas and bloating.

There is good news for those who are lactose intolerant, however – they don’t have to avoid all dairy products. The process of aging and fermenting dairy foods – such as some cheese, Greek yogurt and kefir – helps to break down the lactose, making these foods more easily digested.

When eaten in moderation, cheese with smaller amounts of lactose (sugar content under 1 gram per one ounce

servicing), such as cheddar, Parmesan, Swiss, mozzarella, and blue cheese, as well as Greek yogurt and kefir that contain live, active cultures* are great choices to try. And if you desire an occasional tall cold glass of milk, choose brands that are specially treated to be lactose-free.

(If you think you’re lactose intolerant and want to know for sure, it’s best to talk with your health professional and ask to be tested, rather than self-diagnose.)

4. False

Dairy foods provide essential nutrients such as calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Eating dairy can help build strong bones and according to the USDA, is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, and lower blood pressure in adults.

Although full-fat dairy products can contain high levels of saturated fat, they can be enjoyed when eaten in moderation. Studies have shown that eating dairy foods gives a sense of fullness and can actually help some people consume fewer calories throughout the day.

Eating the recommended three servings of dairy per day can include a 1/2 cup of milk at breakfast (with cereal or by itself), an 8-ounce container of plain yogurt at lunch time, and 1-1/2 ounces (approximately two slices) of hard cheese such as Parmesan, Swiss or cheddar at dinner (or as a snack with a piece of fruit). A healthy diet is about balance, so be sure to eat lots of vegetables, along with recommended amounts for fruits, whole grains, lean protein, nuts and legumes, along with your dairy!

**The words “live and active cultures” refer to the living organisms such as *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, which convert pasteurized milk to yogurt during fermentation. Look for these words on the ingredient list or look for the “Live and Active Cultures” seal to ensure these cultures are in your product (especially if you choose to eat frozen yogurt, as some products don’t contain them).*