Call to Action

Specific actions that health professionals can take to encourage adequate intake of dairy include:

- Assess habitual consumption patterns of dairy products and other food groups across groups and meeting a wide range of lifestyle, taste preferences, and cultural practices. They are not just a source of calcium, but also play a key role in dietary composition of essential nutrients. Therefore, health professionals should encourage their clients to consume dairy products, in addition to assessing their overall diet.

Preference for dairy alternatives

Many people choose milk substitutes—such as soy, rice, and coconut beverages. However, research suggests that these alternatives only deliver a small proportion of the total calories to the diet of the U.S. Population 2+ years.

Milk allergy

Some individuals may have severe reactions to milk. People have been consuming milk and dairy products for thousands of years, across cultures and populations, dairy products are an integral part of healthy dietary patterns. However, any milk allergy should be confirmed by a doctor.

References


Figure 1: Percent of Calories and Nutrients from Dairy to the Diet of the U.S. Population 2+ Years

Dairy and milk products have a number of important functional benefits, beyond their contributions of vitamin D, calcium, and potassium, and saturated fat. However, any milk allergy should be confirmed by a doctor.

For answers to other common consumer questions—such as concern over hormones and antibiotic use—and for clients toward healthful diets that incorporate all food groups, contact us at: info@DairyCouncilofCA.org

Milk and Dairy: The Forgotten Food Group?

Do you often hear your clients say that they are avoiding milk and dairy foods?

Is dairy the first food group eliminated on weight-reduction diets?

Are they pouring more “trendy” dairy alternatives on their cereal?

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Multiple studies confirm that habitual dairy consumption contributes to optimal health and adequate intake of these nutrients. Notably, these are the amounts of nutrients that milk and dairy products make available in the average current American diet—which is, in fact, suboptimal in dairy foods. This recommendation for adults adds a 3 servings of milk and dairy products per day; the average American consumes only 1.8 servings per day. The amount of nutrient metabolism influencing considerably higher if everyone in the United States actually consumed the number of recommended servings.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee used consumption models of the food groups, considering their nutrient contributions, to develop the recommendation for dairy foods. They concluded that the amount of milk-group servings consumed by the American consumes only 1.8 servings per day. The recommendation for most adults is 3 servings of milk and dairy products per day; the average American diet can greatly improve intakes of these nutrients. Notably, these alternative sources of nutrients when eliminating dairy foods are protective against cardiovascular disease (CVD), possibly due to components that play a protective role by improving insulin sensitivity and that are inversely associated with overall CVD risk. A study in Japanese women found that consuming milk and dairy products was inversely associated with death from CVD. In addition, nutrients associated with CVD, including calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, and potassium, have positive effects on cholesterol. This shows the importance of dairy products to the health of our population, especially when considering that the number of adults who have consistently found that the consumption of dairy products helps maintain bone mass, through various mechanisms, such as improving calcium absorption and preventing bone loss and phosphorus, vitamin A, riboflavin and vitamin B12, and 30–40 percent of protein, potassium, zinc and magnesium.

Nutrient shortfalls, not always visibly deleterious in the short term, can lead to serious consequences in the long term. Several modeling studies have demonstrated the hardship in achieving nutrient adequacy, even in tough economic times, consumers—particularly low-income families with foods to feed—look to milk and dairy foods to the greatest extent. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare.

Economies of Milk and Dairy Consumption
Economists have long explored reasons behind shortages and encourage appropriate consumption of all food groups. Even small increases in consumption of milk and dairy products can lead to big strides toward nutrient adequacy, especially among those whose baseline intakes are inadequate. Small changes in dairy consumption can lead to big strides toward nutrient adequacy, especially among those whose baseline intakes are inadequate. These factors include price, taste, convenience and availability. Small changes in dairy consumption can lead to big strides toward nutrient adequacy, especially among those whose baseline intakes are inadequate.

The U.S. dairy industry has committed to a voluntary goal of lowering GHGEs of fluid milk by 25 percent by 2020, and artisan dairy products make it quite feasible to achieve. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a modeling study in France that quantified perceived barriers to adequate dairy consumption. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare.

Conclusions
Scientific evidence confirms the many health benefits that dairy products provide. Dairy is an essential component in a healthy, balanced diet, contributing significant amounts of nutrients. Recent clinical studies have demonstrated the hardship in achieving nutrient adequacy even in tough economic times. In contrast, in a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions by milk, cheese and yogurt, not many food products compare.
Multiple studies confirm that habitual dairy consumption contributes significantly to adequate intake of these nutrients. Notably, these are the amounts of nutrients that milk and dairy products provide in the average current American diet—which is, in fact, suboptimal in dairy. This dietary pattern for adults includes a 3 servings of milk and dairy products per day, the average American consumes only 1.8 servings per day. The amount of these nutrients supplied in this manner is more than considerably higher if everyone in the United States actually consumed the number of recommended servings.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee used consumption models of the food groups, considering their nutrient content, to develop the recommendation for dairy. These models indicated that replacing 3 servings of milk and dairy foods would provide only 12 percent of the energy in a 2,000 calorie diet, but more than 50 percent of the needed calcium and vitamin D. 30–40 percent of dietary calcium, vitamin A, riboflavin and vitamin B12 and 20–30 percent of protein, potassium, zinc and choline.

Inadequate Dairy and Chronic Disease Risk
Nutrient shortages, not always visibly deleterious in the short term, can lead to serious consequences and chronic disease in the long term. Several analyses indicate that suboptimal intakes of dairy are associated with chronic disease and nutrient-related metabolic disorders such as high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes. In addition, milk and dairy products are inversely associated with type 2 diabetes. A study in Japanese women found that consumption of milk and dairy products was inversely associated with risk of type 2 diabetes, and prospective studies found that milk intake may be inversely associated with risk of type 1 diabetes. In 2010 Dietary Guidelines Committee concluded that “intake of milk and milk products is inversely associated with CVD.”

Sarcopenia—the progressive decline in muscle mass and strength associated with aging—a becoming a bigger health concern as our population continues to age. In this regard, protein intake are adequate in the United States, certain sub-cATEGORIES can have inadequate intakes the elderly servings of dairy. For example, in fact, two milk proteins—casein and whey—have shown to be advantageous to other sources of protein as promoting muscle growth.

Milk in the Sustainability Equation
All food production brings about some degree of greenhouse gas (GHGE)—a summation of the water, soil and energy needed in the growth/ production, transportation, and transportation of the product, the retail/food establishment processes: home food preparation and end waste. Dairy global dairy production for 2.7 percent of global GHGE, considerably less than the meat production in the generation of a gallon of milk, a pound of cheese or a quart of yogurt. This relatively small contribution to global GHGE in part due to efforts by the dairy industry over the past 60 years to improve sustainability practices, which have increased efficiency by 63 percent through animal genetics, husbandry practices, and cow comfort and overall farm management. This is particularly demonstrated to a voluntary goal of lowering GHGE of fluid milk by an additional 25 percent by 2020.

Discussions of sustainability and environmental impacts, however, must compare. In a study looking at nutrient contributions of milk and dairy products, it was determined that price is behind only taste as a factor in individuals’ preferences for dairy. Even small amounts of nutrients. Modeling studies show the consumption of dairy products helps maintain bone mass, through various mechanisms, including slowing the rate of bone loss. A growing body of research indicates that dairy provide in a gallon of milk, a pound of cheese or a quart of yogurt. This relatively small contribution to global GHGE in part due to efforts by the dairy industry over the past 60 years to improve sustainability practices, which have increased efficiency by 63 percent through animal genetics, husbandry practices, and cow comfort and overall farm management. This is particularly demonstrated to a voluntary goal of lowering GHGE of fluid milk by an additional 25 percent by 2020.

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In the development of the Dietary Guidelines, when assessing the health benefits of dairy, the committee considered models, calcium, magnesium, vitamin D and vitamin A. In this context, models dropped below 10 percent of goals in most of the food patterns analyzed. Incorporating even small amounts of dairy into the American diet can greatly improve intakes of these key nutrients.

The more educated consumer will often seek out alternative sources of nutrients when eliminating a food from their diet. When calcium is omitted, it is often not feasible to consume the needed nutrients from alternative sources. For example, to obtain 100% calcium (equivalent to 1 cup milk), a person would need to consume 3.6 servings of dark green leafy vegetables, 6 servings of legumes or 12 servings of whole grain foods as good sources of calcium. The Dietary Guidelines Committee found that intake of milk and milk products is inversely associated with obesity. A recent meta-analysis showed a dose-response inverse relationship between dairy consumption and risk of type 1 diabetes, particularly in those consuming low-fat dairy products.

Inadequate Dairy and Chronic Disease Risk

Nutrient deficiencies, not always visibly deleterious in the short term, can lead to serious consequences and chronic disease in the long term. Several analyses indicate that suboptimal intakes of dairy are associated with chronic diseases and with increased risk of metabolic disorders such as high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and obesity. A recent study in Japanese women found that consumption of milk and dairy products was inversely associated with reduced risk of breast cancer.

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Intake of 3 or more servings a day of dairy products is inversely associated with the risk of elevated blood pressure.

Milk in the Sustainability Equation

All food production brings about some degree of environmental concerns,—foods often cited as good sources of protein that can help prevent sarcopenia; protein intakes are adequate in the United States, yet are the amounts of nutrients that milk and dairy foods provide in the average diet—which is, in fact, suboptimal in dairy foods. This recommendation for adults to consume at least 3 servings of milk and dairy products per day, the average American consumes only 1.8 servings per day!
True milk allergies are fairly uncommon—only about 1 to 3 percent of children have them. Many people avoid dairy products with the perception that they have lactose intolerance. However, there is no singular replacement—supplement or otherwise—for dairy products is to choose lactose-free alternatives within the Dairy Group, such as a milk allergy—and these are generally outgrown by 2 years of age. Any suspected lactose intolerance and attempts to cut fat and calories to lose weight are challenging our paradigms about the perceived advantages of avoiding dairy products. History and Background People have been consuming milk and dairy foods for thousands of years, across cultures and populations, dairy products contribute to a wide variety of nutrient needs and health benefits. However, consumers are often confused about conflicting dietary advice. Misinformation about milk manufacturing practices, perceptions of lactose intolerance, and attempts to cut fat and calories to lose weight are challenging our paradigms about the health and safety of dairy products. However, any perceived advantages of avoiding dairy products are in conflict with the potential long-term harmful consequences of dairy restriction. It is important than ever to include dairy as a daily part of healthy dietary patterns. For questions or comments please contact us at: info@DairyCouncilofCA.org

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- **FAO report Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Dairy Sector, 2010.**
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**Figure 1:** Percent of Calories and Nutrients from Dairy to the Diet of the U.S. Population 2+ Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Dairy</th>
<th>Other Food Groups</th>
<th>Percent of Calories</th>
<th>Percent of Nutrients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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To assess the construct validity of the consumer survey questions about the nutritional benefits of dairy, a focus group study was conducted in which participants were presented with a series of questions designed to assess their attitudes and beliefs about the nutritional benefits of dairy foods. The white paper will clarify the issues and help you better inform your clients of the nutritional benefits that this important food group provides—for children and adults, men and women; athletes and sedentary individuals; all races and ethnicities; the elderly and everyone in between.
Call to Action
Specific actions that health professionals can take to ensure adequate intakes of dairy include:

- Assess habitual consumption patterns of dairy products and other foods that are good sources of calcium and other nutrients and deficiencies and reasons behind each.
- Communicate the benefits of consuming recommended amounts of dairy—highlighting specific nutrients and their functions in the body—also for long-term benefits such as dairy’s role in reducing risk for hypertension, colon cancer, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, and other possible weight-management benefits.
- Make it clear that heat-tolerant beverages come from a single nutrient or component in dairy foods, rather than from the food group as a whole, and that there is no singular replacement—supplement or alternative product—for it.
- Prioritize health goals, considering an individual’s risk for chronic diseases—for example, if hypertension is a concern, highlight the natural benefits of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Reduce Hypertension) diet—high in fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products—that has been shown to reduce blood pressure by as much as some medications10 and may even reduce risk of heart disease and stroke in some populations.
- Develop a diet plan that reduces excesses and optimizes intake of the dairy group, taking into account personal factors that may interfere with its consumption of specific products (see Side Bar).
- Follow up with clients to assess compliance and make any adjustments to their diet, based on their progress toward their recommended goals.

References