

## Diet Drinks Found to Increase Stroke Risk

Of 81,714 women ages 50 to 79 who participated in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study (1993 to 1998), those who self-reported drinking two or more artificially sweetened beverages per day—just 5.1 percent of the group—had the highest risk of small artery occlusion ischemic stroke, as well as the highest risk of death from all causes. Among women with no history of cardiovascular disease or diabetes, high consumption of diet beverages resulted in a two-fold increase in ischemic stroke risk, according to a study published in *Stroke*, Feb. 14, 2019. Also, women with a body mass index (BMI) above 30 (obese) had double the risk than those with a BMI under 30.

## Tomatoes' Health Benefits Differ by Their Skin Color

Tomatoes contain antioxidants, which fight free radicals (unstable molecules) in the body. However, a recent study, published in *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*, January 2019, found that different types and colors of tomatoes have different antioxidants. Researchers studied four organic and four hybrid tomato types. The classic red tomato had the most lycopene and beta carotene, both carotenoids, which are good for heart health and protect against some cancers and sun damage. Orange tomatoes were highest in tocopherol (vitamin E), which is good for skin, including skin cancer and rashes. Yellow tomatoes had the most polyphenols, which help with cholesterol, blood pressure, and overall heart health. 🍅

## HEALTHY EATING

# Demystifying Today's Milk Choices

*How to decide which one is right for you.*

In the U.S., milk is a primary part of most children's diets from the time they're born. However, adults often outgrow the taste, or develop an intolerance to the milk-sugar lactose. As a result, more than 80 percent of people in the U.S. don't meet their daily recommended requirement of 3 cups of low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt, and cheese) per day, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Calcium, a key nutrient in dairy, is critical for preventing bone loss as we age. A 2018 study in *Osteoporosis International* showed an 8 percent decrease in hip fractures among men and women who drank milk.

Meanwhile, a rise in research touting the benefits of plant-based diets, along with increased awareness of lactose intolerance, has fueled a new alternative milk category. With so many choices, how can a person select the right milk to put into their coffee or cereal bowl? Here, we help decipher your options.

### Dairy Milk

**Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free.** These four milk types, as well as lactose-free, A2, and organic milk, have the same amounts of protein (8 grams [g] per cup) and calcium (300 milligrams), along with potassium, phosphorus, iodine, thiamin, riboflavin, and vitamins A, B12, and D3. Vitamin D is added in processing. These milks also contain trace amounts of selenium, zinc, and magnesium.

With society's growing interest in eating healthier, many dairy farms have



Low-fat or fat-free milk can help you meet your recommended requirement of 3 cups of dairy per day.

eliminated antibiotics and artificial growth hormones. Also, removing the milk fat takes out much of the vitamin A, so reduced-fat and fat-free milks are fortified with vitamin A palmitate (which comes from animal products).

**Lactose-free.** Lactose is a sugar found naturally in dairy milk that some people can't fully digest, and it causes bloating, gas, a sour feeling, and diarrhea. The term "lactose-free" is a misnomer. The lactose is not gone. Instead, the enzyme lactase has been added to break down the lactose and make it easier to digest. Lactose-free milk comes in whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free.

**A1 and A2.** A1 and A2 are proteins. Most regular dairy milk has both, although some cows have one or the other in their DNA. Since A1 can cause digestive stress, some cows are being bred to carry just A2, while some companies are removing A1 in processing.

**Organic.** Organic milk is more expensive than regular, but it contains no antibiotics, pesticides, synthetic

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growth hormones, or genetically modified ingredients. Farmers follow guidelines set by the USDA that cover everything from the origin of the livestock to their living conditions and the way they are raised. Organic milk is not pasteurized to slow the growth of bacteria; rather, it's sterilized at a higher temperature than regular milk (280°F vs. 165°F) so it will last longer.

#### Evaporated, condensed, powdered, and ultra-high temperature (UHT).

These all start out as whole milk. Evaporated milk has 60 percent of its water removed. Condensed milk is thicker than evaporated and comes in both unsweetened and sweetened. In the sweetened version, sugar is added as a preservative. Powdered milk has had all of its water removed. All these milks can be reconstituted with water or used as they are in cooking and baking. Their concentration gives them more nutrients than regular dairy milk.

These milks are sterilized. UHT milk (such as Parmalat) has been heated to 275°F to kill fungal spores and can last up to six months unopened and unrefrigerated.

#### Non-Dairy Milk

**Nut milk.** Two options to dairy milk in the nut family are almond and cashew milk. They are made by grinding nuts into a powder and mixing them with

water until smooth, then straining the pulp. Nut milks have more calcium than dairy milk (45% of your Recommended Daily Value compared with 30 percent for dairy milk), but that's because they are fortified. They have just 60 calories and 2.5 grams of fat per cup. Nut milk is healthy, but it does not contain as much protein as dairy milk, so be sure to get your daily protein requirement elsewhere. You can make nut milk at home with a blender, nuts, and some water, then straining the pulp.

**Soy milk.** Soy milk is high in protein (8 g) and in healthy unsaturated fats. Of 4.5 g of fat per cup, 90 percent is from unsaturated fat. Research published in the journal *Nutrients*, as well as other earlier studies, have pointed

to soy having anti-inflammatory effects, resulting in reduced risk for cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol.

**Rice milk.** Rice milk is made primarily from brown rice. It contains no fats and is fortified with calcium and vitamins A, B12, and D, but has very

little protein. It comes in a shelf-stable (non-refrigerated) version and can be stored for a few months unopened.

**Coconut milk.** Ninety percent of coconut milk's fat is saturated fat. Coconut milk contains much of the same nutrients as other milks, but due to its fat content, should be consumed only in small amounts. 🥥



*If you prefer a plant-based milk, be sure to make up your protein from other foods in your daily diet.*

MILK SERVING: 1 CUP	CALORIES	FAT (G)	SAT FAT (G)	CARB (G)	PROTEIN (G)	SUGAR (G)	SODIUM (MG)
Whole/Organic/UHT	150	8	5	12	8	11	120
Reduced-fat	130	5	3	12	8	12	130
Low-fat	110	2.5	1.5	13	8	12	130
Fat-free/skim	90	0	0	13	8	12	130
Lactose-free/A2	160	9	5	13	8	12	130
Nut	60	2.5	0	8	1	7	150
Soy	110	4.5	0.5	9	8	6	115
Rice	130	2.5	0	25	1	14	80
Coconut	70	4.5	4	6	0	5	65

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates. Source: Food packages, USDA.gov, and brand websites.

## Red Raspberries May Help Blood Sugar Levels

For people who have prediabetes or are insulin resistant, consuming red raspberries may help keep their blood sugar from spiking and reduce their need for insulin, according to a study published in *Obesity*, Feb. 14, 2019. The fiber in the fruit prevents the sugar from being absorbed. Also, anthocyanins—an anti-inflammatory and disease fighter—suppress the body's production of sugar. In this study, 32 people ages 20 to 60 were given breakfast for three days. The test group contained 21 overweight or obese people who had prediabetes; the remainder did not have those characteristics. The first day, there were no raspberries in the meal. On day two, breakfast included 1 cup of frozen red raspberries. On day three, breakfast included 2 cups of frozen red raspberries. The results showed that as the amount of raspberries consumed increased, participants needed less insulin.

## Self-Monitoring Results in Higher Weight Loss

People who monitored their food intake on a daily basis through a private web portal had better success with both short- and long-term weight loss than people who didn't visit the site at all or didn't visit as much, according to research published in the journal *Obesity*, Feb. 25, 2019. Of 124 people, 80.1 percent were obese; 90.8 percent were female; 23.2 percent were African American. Participants were evaluated in month 1 and again in month 6. In the first month, they spent 23 minutes on the website. By month six, they had cut down to 15 minutes per day but were just as successful as they were earlier in the program. People who lost more than 5 to 10 percent of their weight spent the most time on the website, but frequency of visits was the leading factor more than time spent. African Americans logged into the site for the least amount of time. 📊