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Cow's Milk – Good or Bad?

Milk's gotten a bad rep recently as a result of several media stories and organizations creating skepticism about its health effects. As a result, more and more people are switching to plant-based milks such as almond, soy, and rice. So what's the deal with cow's milk? Is it bad for us?

According to a 2016 review of the available scientific evidence on milk and dairy products, milk and dairy can contribute to meeting our daily nutrient recommendations and may even protect against certain chronic diseases. The review also concluded that very few adverse effects have been reported with regular intake.

Despite the encouraging conclusions of the review, equal arguments can be made for milk being "bad." Milk has its caveats for some. It's got a much larger quantity of lactose compared to cheese and yogurt so many people have trouble digesting it. Acne and sinus congestion can also be issues for some who drink milk. Some say

that the current recommendations for three servings of dairy a day are more about politics and industry lobbying than they are about science.

Critics aside, it's hard to deny milk's impressive nutrient profile. Milk is an excellent source of bone-building nutrients like calcium, potassium, and vitamin D, as well as other important nutrients like riboflavin, vitamin B12, zinc, and protein. Thankfully, we can obtain the same nutrients in meat, seafood, veggies, fruits, nuts, beans, and plant-based milks (which are often fortified with calcium and Vitamin D).

Bottom line? Milk can be a part of a balanced eating regimen but is not required to meet your nutritional needs. If you like the taste of milk and you have no trouble digesting it, then go for it! But if you aren't a fan and/or it gives you tummy troubles, rest assured that you can meet your nutritional needs by following a well-planned diet that includes a variety of different foods.



CAMPUS HEALTH

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Food and nutrition services (including healthy eating, cooking skills, weight management, digestive problems, hormonal and cardiovascular diseases, and eating disorders) are offered year-round at Campus Health. Call (520) 621-6483 to make an appointment.