

Nutrition and MyPlate: Dairy



The dairy group includes foods that are made from milk and are also high in calcium (a nutrient that builds strong bones). If you're lactose-intolerant, special milk products can help. If you're allergic to dairy or vegan, be sure to get your calcium from leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens and from calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice and soy products.

Nutrient-rich choices

It's best to choose low-fat or nonfat dairy products. Nutrient-rich choices include:

- Milk (low-fat or nonfat). Milk contains the nutrients calcium, potassium, vitamins A and D, and protein.
- Low-fat or nonfat cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt
- Foods made with these products, such as cream of broccoli soup made with nonfat milk or quesadillas made with low-fat cheese
- Fortified, unsweetened soy milk

What makes dairy less healthy?

- Many dairy products are high in fat. Always look for low-fat or nonfat varieties. You can ease into this. If you drink whole milk now, make the move to 2% milk first, then to nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk.

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- Most cheeses are high in fat. If you select a cheese with a strong taste, you may eat less than you would of a milder cheese. Also look for low-fat cheese or cheese made with part skim milk.
 - Added sugar, such as in ice cream and frozen yogurt, makes dairy products less healthy. Compare food labels to find brands lower in fat, added sugar, and calories.

One small change

Drink low-fat or nonfat milk with at least one meal each day. Have a better idea? Write it here:
