

# Milk calcium for all it's worth



Consuming milk and milk products provides health benefits. People who have a diet rich in milk products can help reduce the risk of low bone mass.

Foods in the milk group contain nutrients that are vital for your health—calcium, potassium, vitamin D and protein. All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of the milk, yogurt and cheese food group. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream and butter, are not. Most milk group choices should be fat-free or low-fat.

## Making wise dairy choices

- Include fat-free or low-fat milk as a beverage at meals.
- If you drink cappuccinos or lattes, ask for them with fat-free (skim) milk.
- Add fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water to oatmeal and hot cereals.
- For dessert, top cut-up fruit with flavored yogurt or make a yogurt dip.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk when making condensed cream soups.
- Top casseroles, soups, stews or vegetables with shredded low-fat cheese.
- Top a baked potato with fat-free or low-fat yogurt or make a yogurt dip for your vegetables.



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# Milk product alternatives



If you avoid milk because you're lactose intolerant, the best way to get the health benefits of milk is to choose lactose-free or lower-lactose products, like cheese, yogurt or lactose-free milk. You can also use the enzyme lactase before consuming milk products. Lactase enzyme drops or tablets are available in your local pharmacy or grocery store. Other alternatives that offer calcium include:

- Calcium fortified juices
- Calcium fortified breads and cereals
- Soy or rice beverages, such as soy or rice milk
- Canned fish – sardines, salmon with bones
- Soybeans and other soy products – tofu, tempeh
- Dried beans – pintos, black beans, lentils, garbanzo beans
- Leafy greens – collard greens, kale, bok choy and turnip greens

Make nutritious choices from the milk group each day. It will be well worth your while for stronger bones and a healthier body.

