

**Dine With Dairy Products**  
**Daily Union Article**  
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June is National Dairy month. The National Dairy Council was formed to raise awareness and provide nutrition education. For over 100 years the non-profit Council has worked to promote dairy products and advocate on behalf of dairy producers from all over the United States. I am proud to say that I married into a family that had a dairy and appreciate the hard work and dedication it took to keep the operation going for over 40 years. Unless you live or work on a dairy, it is difficult to understand how much energy, planning, and time it takes to bring milk and milk products to our American tables. I want to offer a big THANK YOU to our dairy farmers and the people who work to bring dairy products to consumers.

Milk is a wholesome healthy food product that meets many nutritional needs our body has. Calcium is a key nutrient found in milk and other dairy products. It is used to help build our bones and teeth while also working to maintain our bone mass. For most Americans, dairy products serve as the primary source of calcium in our diets.

Potassium is also found in dairy products, such as yogurt, fluid milk, and soymilk. This nutrient is needed to help maintain healthy blood pressure, transmit nerve impulses, and reduce the risk of kidney stones. Additionally, it helps decrease bone loss and works in muscles to help them contract.

Although milk is known for having Vitamin D, there is very little of this nutrient that naturally occurs in liquid milk. There are two natural sources of Vitamin D: 1) our bodies can synthesize Vitamin D naturally when we are exposed to ultraviolet light, or 2) a few foods are good sources such as oily fish, eggs, and fortified foods. The latter is where liquid milk fits in. During processing, liquid milk is fortified with Vitamin D. Vitamin D works to maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorous in our bodies. Thus is needed to build and maintain bones.

Adequate daily consumption of low-fat dairy products also has been associated with a reduced risk of certain diseases such as cardiovascular disease and Type 2 Diabetes.

The United States Department of Agriculture has identified the amount of dairy needed for each individual based on their gender and age. Refer to the chart provided to see how much you need each day from the dairy food group.

<b>Daily recommendation</b>					
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	2 cups	<b>Women</b>	19-30 years old	3 cups
	4-8 years old	2 ½ cups		31-50 years old	3 cups
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	3 cups		51+ years old	3 cups
	14-18 years old	3 cups	<b>Men</b>	19-30 years old	3 cups
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	3 cups		31-50 years old	3 cups

	14-18 years old	3 cups		51+ years old	3 cups
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You will note that children need as much daily dairy intake as adults, even though their body size is smaller. Why is that? Children need proportionately more dairy products because they are building bone mass while they are young. Ensuring adequate dairy consumption is important to their bone health as a child and can impact their bone health as an adult.

How much makes a cup serving? In general, 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soymilk (soy beverage), 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese can be considered as 1 cup from the Dairy Group.

When choosing liquid milk to drink, the USDA recommends that you choose fat-free or low-fat milk. These products, while low in fat, still contain the same level of nutritional value as whole milk without the calories. If you choose a sweetened milk product, such as chocolate-flavored milk, you are adding sugars that contribute to the recommended maximum limit of “empty calories” (i.e. calories from solid fats and added sugars).

For individuals who are lactose intolerant, a calcium-fortified soymilk, lactose-free milk or yogurts are healthy substitutions. These products can be used to meet the 3 cup daily requirement recommended for optimal health.

To help you make healthy choices as you include dairy products in your daily diet, here are some tips provided by the MyPlate.gov website hosted by USDA:

- Include milk or calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) as a beverage at meals. Choose fat-free or low-fat milk.
- If you usually drink whole milk, switch gradually to fat-free milk, to lower saturated fat and calories. Try reduced fat (2%), then low-fat (1%), and finally fat-free (skim).
- 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.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk when making condensed cream soups (such as cream of tomato).
- Have fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a snack.
- Make a dip for fruits or vegetables from yogurt.
- Make fruit-yogurt smoothies in the blender.
- For dessert, make chocolate or butterscotch pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Top cut-up fruit with flavored yogurt for a quick dessert.
- Top casseroles, soups, stews, or vegetables with shredded reduced-fat or low-fat cheese.
- Top a baked potato with fat-free or low-fat yogurt.

Dairy products are important for maintaining a healthy body. It keeps our teeth and bones strong, helps us grow, and can reduce the risk of disease. Look for creative new ways to ensure you get your daily dairy intake. For more information about nutrition, wellness, and dairy products, contact me at the Geary County Extension Office (785) 238-4161. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!