

June: National Dairy Month

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

National Dairy Month is a great way to start the summer with "3-A-Day" of nutrient-rich dairy foods. From calcium to potassium, dairy products



like milk contain nine essential nutrients which may help to better manage your weight and reduce your risk for high blood pressure, osteoporosis and certain cancers. Whether it's protein

to help build and repair the muscle tissue of active bodies or vitamin A to help maintain healthy skin, dairy products are a natural nutrient powerhouse. Those are just a few of the reasons that you should celebrate dairy not just in June, but all year long.

Tips for getting 3 cups of dairy daily:

What foods are included? All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are included. Most



dairy group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not part

of this group. Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) is also part of the dairy group.

How much is needed? The amount of food from the dairy group you need to eat depends on age. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the chart below:

Daily Recommendation		
Children	2-3 years old	2 cups
	4-8 years old	2 ½ cups
Girls	9-18 years old	3 cups
Boys	9-18 years old	3 cups
Women	19 years and older	3 cups
Men	19 years and older	3 cups



What counts as a cup? 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.

- *Milk (choose fat-free or low-fat milk)*
 - 1 cup milk
 - 1 half-pint container milk
 - ½ cup evaporated milk
- *Yogurt (choose fat-free or low-fat yogurt)*
 - 1 regular container (8 fluid ounces)
 - 1 cup yogurt
- *Cheese (choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheeses)*
 - 1 ½ ounces hard cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan)
 - ⅓ cup shredded cheese
 - 2 ounces processed cheese (American)
 - ½ cup ricotta cheese
 - 2 cups cottage cheese



What are the benefits? Consuming foods in this group provide vital nutrients for health and maintenance of your body.

- *Calcium* - is used for building bones and teeth and in maintaining bone mass. Dairy products are the primary source of calcium in American diets. Intake of dairy products is linked to improved bone health, and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- *Potassium* - diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Dairy products, especially yogurt, fluid milk, and soymilk (soy beverage), provide potassium.
- *Vitamin D* - functions in the body to maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorous, thereby helping to build and maintain bones. Milk and soymilk (soy beverage) that are fortified with vitamin D are good sources of this nutrient. Other sources include vitamin D-fortified yogurt and vitamin D-fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereals.

Lactose intolerance. If you avoid milk because of lactose intolerance, there are still several ways to get calcium in your diet.



You can choose alternatives lower in lactose or lactose-free such as cheese, yogurt, or lactose-free milk, or consume the enzyme lactase before consuming milk products. There are also calcium

fortified juices, cereals, breads, soy beverages, or rice beverages available in stores.

Getting more dairy into your diet. Try including fat-free or low-fat milk as a beverage at meals. 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). Dairy foods also make great snacks, such as eating fat-free or low-fat yogurt by itself using it to make a dip for fruits and vegetables, or making fruit-yogurt smoothies in the blender. Another option would be to use shredded low-fat cheese to top casseroles, soups, stews, or vegetables. There are lots of options when it comes to getting your 3 cups of dairy.



For more food, nutrition and health information go to www.food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go straight to the website.

Additional Resources & Links:

- **UNL Extension Neb Guide.** MyPlate: Dairy Group, G1611. This publication describes healthy ways to incorporate proper amounts of dairy foods into the diet. <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1611.pdf>
- **Healthy Bites Newsletter.** Keep your bones strong – information and resources on how to eat smart and stay active. <http://go.unl.edu/rnd>

- **Dairy-Free and Non-Dairy: Milk-Allergic Consumers.** Milk-allergic consumers and the parents of milk-allergic consumers should be somewhat cautious about the use of food products labeled as dairy-free or non-dairy. These terms can appear rather prominently on the labels of food packages. However, these terms should not be used as a short-cut to examination of the ingredient statement that appears on the package label. <http://farrp.unl.edu/resources/gi-fas/opinion-and-summaries/dairy-free-and-non-dairy>
- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknenewsletters>
- **UNL Extension Calendar – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for June.** <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/june>

Sources:

1. International Dairy Foods Association. (2013). June is National Dairy Month. Accessed at: <http://www.idfa.org/news--views/media-kits/cheese/june-is-national-dairy-month/>.
2. National Dairy Council. (2012). The Dairy Connection. Accessed at: <http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/Pages/Home.aspx>.
3. Behrends, D., Tickner, C., and Franzen-Castle, L.. (2012). MyPlate: Dairy Group. UNL Extension Publication, G1611. Accessed at: <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1611.pdf>.
4. United States Department of Agriculture. (2012). MyPlate. Dairy Group. Accessed at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/dairy.html>.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (7th ed.). <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm>.

Updated: May 2013