

June is Dairy Month: Health benefits of dairy

A healthy diet is comprised of a mix of nutrient-rich foods and beverages. The United States Department of Agriculture includes dairy as part of its MyPlate program, which recommends foods and serving sizes of those foods from different food groups. For the purposes of the USDA guidelines, dairy includes milk, cheese, yogurt, lactose-free milk, and fortified soy milk and yogurt. However, dairy also may include cream cheese, sour cream, cream, and butter. Recommendations regarding dairy consumption depend on age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity. Around two to three cups per day may be advised. However, the USDA says about 90 percent of Americans are not getting enough dairy. Dairy plays an important role in personal health. Here's a look at why dairy is a key component of a healthy diet.

- Dairy supports bone health. Calcium comprises the main mineral in the bones of the body. Healthline advises that dairy is often the best source of calcium in the human diet. Evidence indicates that dairy can help improve bone density, reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, and lower fracture risk in older adults. Dairy, when consumed with calcium-rich leafy greens and legumes, ensures people get enough calcium to affect bone improvements.
- Dairy improves vi-



tamin D levels. About one billion people across the globe have vitamin D deficiency, while 50 percent of the population has vitamin D insufficiency, reports the Cleveland Clinic. Vitamin D is produced in the body through exposure to the sun and also comes from dietary sources. Vitamin D is a nutrient the body needs, along with calcium, to build strong bones and keep them healthy. Dairy products are often fortified with vitamin D to work in conjunction with calcium for good health.

- Dairy helps to sustain energy levels. Dairy provides a source of high-quality protein and essential amino acids. Protein can curb hunger and help a person feel satiated longer. Dairy can help a person maintain fitness performance and may also be used for weight management.

- Dairy promotes gut health. Fermented dairy and foods in the dairy group that contain live cultures can add beneficial bacteria to the digestive tract to foster a healthier microbiota, according to U.S.

Dairy. Cheeses, yogurt and kefir are fermented foods. These foods may improve digestion and gut barrier function.

- Boost the immune system. Dairy contains protein, vitamin A, zinc, and selenium, which work together to strengthen the body's immune system. Dairy contains all nine of the essential amino acids that are responsible for supporting the immune system and building and repairing tissue, says Dairy Farmers of America.

Those who want to incorporate more dairy into their diets are urged to choose low- and non-fat versions, which do not contain as much saturated fat as full-fat dairy. Saturated fat can contribute to elevated "bad" cholesterol (LDL) numbers and increase the risk of heart disease. Harvard Health suggests no more than 20 grams of saturated fat per day for the average 2,000-calorie diet, making low-fat dairy options a smarter choice.

Dairy is an important food group for good health that helps to strengthen bones and the immune system.

THANKS to the Dairy Producers Who Nourish Our Nation



The Open Supreme Grand Champion Holstein heifer was exhibited by Hadley Olt, of Rocky Run Farms, Greensburg, at the Green County Fair Dairy Show last week. The Open Reserve Supreme Grand Champion Ayrshire heifer was exhibited by Jon Ford, of Silent Beauty Farm, Lebanon.



Hadley Olt, of Rocky Run Farms, Greensburg, had the Open and 4-H Junior Champion Holstein heifer at the Green County Fair Dairy Show last week.. The Open and 4-H Reserve Junior Champion heifer was shown by Jon Ford for Rocky Run Farms.

Photos by Clevis Jeffries

Congratulations to the winners of the Green County Fair Dairy and Beef cattle shows



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HADLEY OLT

Dr. Ange Olt and the Mill Creek Veterinary Center staff congratulate the winners of the Green County Fair Dairy and Beef Cattle Shows

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