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DAIRY Nutrition Digest

SCIENTIFIC NEWSLETTER ON NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The «*Dairy Nutrition Digest*» is EDA's quarterly scientific newsletter providing the latest science-based information on dairy-related nutrition and health topics. Scientific articles are summarised in user friendly language for a broad audience.

Eating cheese is associated with lowering risk for metabolic syndrome

A recent study from Norway found that consumption of cheese may reduce the risk of the metabolic syndrome.

Data on the intake of cheese (all kinds) and soft drinks and on risk factors for metabolic syndrome from 5344 men and 6150 women of the Oslo Health Study were analysed. The metabolic syndrome is a combination of medical disorders such as high blood fat, high blood pressure and overweight that, when occurring together, increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Frequency of cheese intake was assessed as: seldom/never, 1-3 times/month, 1-3 times/week, 4-6 times/week, 1-2 times/day and 3 times or more per day.

The researcher found that the association between soft drink intake and metabolic syndrome risk was reduced as cheese intake increased. This is in line with previous research that suggests that soft drinks may promote and cheese potentially reduce the risk of the metabolic syndrome.

The results question current dietary guidelines which recommend a reduced cheese intake in order to reduce saturated fat intake and support the growing evidence that promote a switch from nutrient-based to food-based dietary guidelines.

Høstmark AT, Haug A. Does cheese intake blunt the association between soft drink intake and risk of the metabolic syndrome? Results from the cross-sectional Oslo Health Study. BMJ Open. 2012 Nov 19;2(6).

Reconsider dietary guidelines that recommend eating fat-reduced dairy

This study looked at the available evidence on the relationship between the consumption of dairy fat and high-fat dairy foods, obesity and cardiometabolic disease. It found that dairy fat consumption is not typically associated with an increased risk of weight gain, cardiovascular disease or diabetes.

The researchers conducted a systematic literature review of observational studies on the relationship between dairy fat and high-fat dairy foods, obesity, and cardio-metabolic disease. They found no support for the hypothesis that dairy fat or high-fat dairy foods contribute to obesity or increased risk of cardiovascular disease. The results even suggest that eating high-fat dairy foods within typical dietary patterns helps to reduce obesity.

The researchers conclude that in contrast to the prevailing scientific and public sentiment and dietary guidelines recommending the consumption of fat-reduced milk and dairy products, the evidence does not offer any compelling reason to avoid dairy fat. They also say that it may be worthwhile to consider milk and dairy as complex foods with effects on health that may be difficult to predict when looking at single nutrients (e.g. saturated fat) and isolated biomarkers of disease risk (e.g. blood lipids). According to the scientists, it seems prudent to reconsider the common recommendation to consume fat-reduced milk and dairy products.

Kratz M, Baars T, Guyenet S. The relationship between high-fat dairy consumption and obesity, cardiovascular, and metabolic disease. Eur J Nutr. 2013 Feb;52(1):1-24.

Yogurt may help keep hunger at bay

Consuming a yogurt snack high in protein in the afternoon leads to reduced hunger, increased feelings of fullness and a later dinner in the evening compared to having no yogurt snack.

This recent study that looked at hunger, fullness and desire to eat in young, healthy women after consumption of yogurt afternoon snacks, varying in protein content. The yoghurts consumed had the same energy content (160 kcal) but contained different amounts of protein (5, 14 and 24 g). The control group received no snack.

The researchers found that snacking, regardless of protein content, led to reduced hunger and increased fullness. The amount of energy eaten at dinner was lower with the yogurts compared to no yogurt. But the women consuming the yogurt with the highest protein content (24g) had least hunger and felt most full. The high-protein yogurt group was also the last to ask for dinner in the evening.

The researchers highlight that the protein in the yogurt is likely responsible for these positive findings, as there is a wealth of research looking at high protein foods with findings that mirror these.

Douglas SM, Ortinau LC, Hoertel HA, Leidy HJ. Low, moderate, or high protein yogurt snacks on appetite control and subsequent eating in healthy women. Appetite. 2013 Jan;60(1):117-22.

Dairy may benefit pregnant women with gestational diabetes

Consumption of low-fat dairy as part of the DASH diet may benefit women that develop a special type of diabetes during pregnancy.

This study looked at how eating a diet that is rich in low-fat dairy, fruit, vegetables and whole grains and low in fat and refined grains - the so-called DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet - effects women with gestational diabetes, a condition characterised as high blood sugar during pregnancy. Diabetes can first occur during pregnancy and it can have many complications such as preterm birth and even foetal death, making dietary management crucial.

The researchers found that the DASH diet helped to control blood sugar, improved blood fat levels and lowered blood pressure after just four weeks. High calcium intake, owing to the dairy, and its potential to lower blood fat, was just one of the many suggested benefits of the DASH diet.

Asemi Z, Tabassi Z, Samimi M, Fahiminejad T, Esmailzadeh A. Favourable effects of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet on glucose tolerance and lipid profiles in gestational diabetes: a randomised clinical trial. Br J Nutr. 2012 Nov 13:1-7.