

WEIGHT LOSS E-NEWSLETTER

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Longer Life For Milk Drinkers, Study Suggests

ScienceDaily — Research undertaken by the Universities of Reading, Cardiff and Bristol has found that drinking milk can lessen the chances of dying from illnesses such as coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke by up to 15-20 %.

In recent times milk has often been portrayed by the media as an unhealthy food. The study, led by Professor Peter Elwood (Cardiff University) together with Professor Ian Givens from the University of Reading's Food Chain and Health Research Theme, aimed to establish whether the health benefits of drinking milk outweigh any dangers that lie in its consumption. Importantly, this is the first time that disease risk associated with drinking milk has been looked at in relation to

the number of deaths which the diseases are responsible for. The review brought together published evidence from 324 studies of milk consumption as predictors of coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke and diabetes. Data on milk consumption and cancer were based on the recent World Cancer Research Fund report. The outcomes were then compared with current death rates from these diseases.

Professor Givens explained: "While growth and bone health are of great importance to health and function, it is the effects of milk and dairy consumption on chronic disease that are of the greatest relevance to reduced morbidity and survival. Our review made it possible to assess overall whether increased milk consumption provides a survival advantage or not. We believe it does."

“Our findings clearly show that when the numbers of deaths from CHD, stroke and colo-rectal cancer were taken into account, there is strong evidence of an overall reduction in the risk of dying from these chronic diseases due to milk consumption. We certainly found no evidence that drinking milk might increase the risk of developing any condition, with the exception of prostate cancer. Put together, there is convincing overall evidence that milk consumption is associated with an increase in survival in Western communities.”

The reviewers also believe that increased milk consumption is likely to reduce health care costs substantially due to reduced chronic disease and associated morbidity.

“There is an urgent need to understand the mechanisms involved and for focused studies to confirm the epidemiological evidence since this topic has major implications for the agri-food industry,” added Professor Givens.

Editors note: I assumed it would be prudent to go over the issue of the Lactose intolerance when talking about milk and milk products.

Ara Keshishian, MD

Points to Remember about Lactose Intolerance:

- Lactose intolerance is the inability or insufficient ability to digest lactose, a sugar found in milk and milk products.
- Lactose intolerance is caused by a deficiency of the enzyme lactase, which is produced by the cells lining the small intestine.
- Not all people with lactase deficiency have digestive symptoms, but those who do may have lactose intolerance.
- Most people with lactose intolerance can tolerate some amount of lactose in their diet.
- People with lactose intolerance may feel uncomfortable after consuming milk and milk products. Symptoms can include abdominal pain, abdominal bloating, gas, diarrhea, and nausea.
- The symptoms of lactose intolerance can be managed with dietary changes.
- Getting enough calcium and vitamin D is a concern for people with lactose intolerance when the intake of milk and milk products is limited. Many foods can provide the calcium and other nutrients the body needs.
- Talking with a doctor or registered dietitian may be helpful in planning a balanced diet that provides an adequate amount of nutrients—including calcium and vitamin D—and minimizes discomfort. A health professional can determine whether calcium and other dietary supplements are needed.
- Milk and milk products are often added to processed foods. Checking the ingredients on food labels is helpful in finding possible sources of lactose in food products.