



DAIRY FREE DIET

A dairy free diet is the avoidance of any milk-based products. When switching to a dairy free diet, it is important to understand which food products contain milk derivatives or other names for milk:

How to read a label for a milk-free diet

Artificial butter flavour
Butter, butter fat, butter oil
Casein, casein hydrolysates
Caseinates (ammonium, calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium)
Cheese, cottage cheese
Cream
Custard, pudding
Ghee
Half and half
Hydrolysates (casein, milk protein, protein, whey, whey protein)
Lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate
Lactoglobulin, lactoferrin
Lactose, lactulose
Milk
Derivative, protein, solids, malted, condensed, evaporated, or dry.
Whole, low-fat, non-fat, skimmed
Goat's milk and milk from other animals
A2 milk
Nisin
Nougat
Recaldent
Rennet casein
Sour cream or sour cream solids
Whey (delactosed, demineralized, protein concentrate)
Yogurt

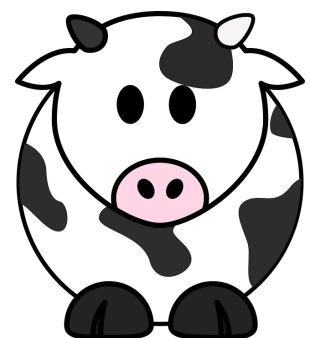


Possible food sources of milk

- Cereals
- Chocolate
- Cheese
- Gravy/sauces
- Seasoning

Non-food sources

Beauty products;
Body lotions, cosmetics
Medication
Supplements



Reasons for going dairy free?

- Lactose intolerance
- IgG immune reaction to cow's milk
- Health; high fat content
- Vegan diet
- Skin issues e.g., eczema, psoriasis, acne
- Sinus problems

Lactose Intolerance

The main reason people go dairy free is due to lactose intolerance. This occurs when the small intestine does not make enough of the enzyme lactase which is needed within the body to break down or digest lactase.

The symptoms of lactose intolerance can be mild or severe and begin 30 minutes to 2 hours after eating or drinking milk products:

- Bloating, pain or cramps, gurgling or rumbling in stomach, gas, loose stools or diarrhoea, vomiting.

How to implement the diet?

It has been found that some people experience a 'high' when digesting dairy products and may also experience withdrawal effects when trying to reduce or eliminate dairy from their diet altogether. Therefore, it may be best that this lifestyle modification be implemented over a period of 2-4 weeks with the view to becoming dairy free at the end of this time.

The idea is to remove or replace all dairy products with non-dairy alternatives e.g., cheese could be replaced with tofu, milk for oat or nut milk and butter with coconut oil.

Pros of the diet

- Lower fat content. As beverages go, milk is relatively high in calories 'One cup of 2% milk has 138 calories.'
- Help make healthier lifestyle choices e.g., instead of opting for a coffee due to lack of milk, substitute for herbal tea.
- May help reduce mucous.

"Dairy isn't necessary in the diet for optimal health, but for many people, it is the easiest way to get the calcium, vitamin D, and protein they need to keep their heart, muscles, and bones healthy and functioning properly," says Vasanti Malik, nutrition research scientist with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Dairy is a rich source of calcium in the diet as well as other nutrients, including phosphate and vitamin D, therefore it is essential to find alternative sources of these nutrients when implementing a dairy free diet.

Non-dairy calcium rich foods

- Dark green vegetables (kale, broccoli, collards, sprouts and cabbage)
- Calcium fortified foods (calcium set tofu)
- Sesame seeds/tahini/nuts (almonds)
- Legumes and some seaweeds



If you're experiencing any of the symptoms discussed above, it might be worthwhile avoiding dairy for a couple of weeks to see if your symptoms improve. Often times complete avoidance for up to 12 weeks is required to help the gut reset. However, if you lack the enzyme lactase then it may be that you will always react. If on the other hand you have an IgG immune reaction this might be possible to correct after a sufficient period of time and thorough gut healing programme.

We are spoilt for choice in the supermarkets with the range of plant-based milks, anything from oat, hemp and rice to almond, hazelnut and coconut. When looking for an alternative to cow's milk I like the least processed milks as they're healthier. They don't contain all the additives. Plenish is my preferred brand of milk that is easily found in supermarkets. It's organic too.



When it comes to cheese, I've yet to find a healthy cheese alternative. I simply use Nutritional yeast which has a cheesy taste. Nutritional yeast can be used in sauces to replace cheese, or sprinkled over dishes. It's pretty versatile and full of nutritional goodness. It works a treat in pesto instead of using parmesan cheese.



When looking for a plant-based yoghurt again the supermarkets are full of these, you'll find soya, oat, coconut and almond varieties. I like Co Yo natural coconut yoghurt the best, it's extremely pure 97% organic coconut milk, a little tapioca starch and live vegan cultures. Coconut Collaborative also do a pretty nice



coconut yoghurt albeit it isn't as pure and Nush have a good range. Just look out for sugar content for the flavoured varieties. It's best to stick with plain and add fruit and a drizzle of honey if desired.