

Nutrition for different milks: Which is best for you?



Milk Basics

- There are many reasons to choose different types of milks, including allergies, intolerances, environmental concerns, and more.
- Cholesterol is formed in animals, and is not found in plant-based beverages, making it a great option if you're trying to limit your cholesterol consumption.
- Many milks, including plant-based milks, are fortified with vitamins and minerals. While some milks are naturally higher in a certain nutrient, these fortifications make most milks comparable in terms of nutrients like vitamins A, D, and B12, and calcium.

Cow Milk

- Macronutrient profile allows for good glycemic control following a meal, reducing risk of type 2 diabetes, and limiting overeating.
- Highly concentrated source of protein, with higher levels of antioxidant proteins compared to sheep and goat milk.
- Naturally good source of calcium and phosphorus, which are important for maintaining bone matrix.
- Fatty acid profile has been shown to raise both "good" and "bad" cholesterol. Also some evidence of antihypertensive effects.
- Conflicting evidence regarding inflammation, with the majority pointing towards anti-inflammatory effects.

Goat Milk

- Easier to digest than cow's milk due to differences in their fat and protein compositions.
- Less inflammation and fewer allergy-specific proteins than cow's milk. Some evidence for immune-boosting and anti-allergy effects, with reduced incidence and severity of conditions like asthma and eczema.
- More balanced fatty acid profile than cow's milk, reducing risk of atherosclerosis, heart attacks, and strokes.
- Chemical composition similar to human breast milk, and therefore better nutrient uptake observed in the body.
- Higher levels of complex sugars than cow's milk, which act as a gut prebiotic and support the gut microbiome.

Sheep Milk

- Able to provide the most energy per serving at 265 kcal per 250 mL.*
- Highly concentrated source of both fat and protein. High concentrations of important vitamins and minerals, with more calcium and phosphorus available than cow's milk of the same serving size.
- Greatest amounts of casein protein compared to cow and goat milk, which acts as an antioxidant to scavenge free radicals in the body.
- High levels of ACE inhibitory factor, making it effective at lowering blood pressure.
- Lowest digestibility compared to cow milk, and goat milk (highest digestibility).

*Information retrieved at chronometer.com.

Oat Milk

- Contains the polysaccharide, β -glucan, which is able to improve the lipid profile (increasing "good" cholesterol and lowering "bad" cholesterol) and ensures regular bowel movements.
- Source of avenanthramides, which are anti-pathogens and exhibit antioxidant properties. These compounds have also been observed to have some vasodilation and anti-inflammatory effects, potentially reducing risk of blood clots and myocardial infarction.
- Prevention of constipation and anti-inflammatory effects associated with β -glucan and avenanthramides are associated with a reduced risk of colon cancer.
- Not a significant source of protein, with 4g per serving.*

*Based on 250mL serving of Earth's Own Unsweetened Original.

Soy Milk

- Supports heart health by lowering blood pressure and maintaining normal cholesterol levels.
- Soy isoflavones have been shown to have antioxidant properties, and are believed to potentially decrease risk of cancer via these properties.
- Greater antioxidative and anti-inflammatory properties than cow's milk. However, soy milk contains significantly less protein than cow's milk.*
- Soy isoflavones act as selective estrogen receptor modulators, acting on certain systems but not all. As a result, they are able to limit bone resorption and reduce hot flash severity in menopausal women.
- The idea that soy isoflavones alter men's sex hormones and reduce fertility has been disproven; it is safe for men to consume soy products.

*Natura unsweetened original soy milk contains 8g protein per 250mL, compared to Fairlife 2% cow's milk, which contains 13g protein for the same serving size.

Almond Milk

- Has been shown to aid in weight loss in a clinical trial when substituting for cow's milk over several weeks. This is likely due to its significantly lower caloric density. However, substituting for cow's milk would also significantly lower protein intake.*
- Significant source of vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant in the body and is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, among other chronic diseases.
- Not a significant source of carbohydrates when unsweetened, and may help to maintain normal blood glucose levels.
- High proportion of unsaturated fatty acids to saturated fatty acids, making almond milk a heart healthy product.

*1g of protein in 250 mL of Earth's Own unsweetened original almond milk, compared to 13g of protein in 250 mL Fairlife's 2% cow's milk.

Coconut Milk

- A good source of antioxidants, which help in preventing damage to the cells of the body and reduce the risk of developing some diseases.
- High proportion of saturated fatty acids, which normally raise "bad" cholesterol. However, a significant proportion of these fatty acids are lauric acid, which helps to form "good" cholesterol in the body, overall improving the lipid profile.
- Lauric acid goes on to form monolaurin in the body, which has antiviral and antibacterial properties and helps to protect the body from disease.
- Not a significant source of protein or carbohydrates, with 0.4 and 1 grams per serving, respectively.

*Based on a 250mL serving of Silk's unsweetened original coconut milk.