

Making The Rounds – October 2008

Say Cheese

by Elissa Brentano

Recently, advertisements sponsored by the American Dairy Farmer's Association have linked the consumption of dairy products to weight loss. They know that nothing catches the eye of an American like the promise of easy weight loss – let alone, a weight loss due to eating food. So, just how true is this claim? Can dairy products actually aid in weight loss?

In a recent study, all participants consumed the same amount of calories daily, but those on the high-dairy diet containing about 200-1300 mg calcium lost 70% more body weight and 64% more body fat than those on the low-dairy diet. Previous studies have shown that calcium can boost weight loss by increasing fat breakdown in fat cells.

The Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine argues that claims made by the Association are misleading. The Association is spreading the word that consuming three servings of milk, cheese, or yogurt each day can help people lose weight. What they should be telling consumers is that consuming three servings of milk in a reduced-calorie diet helps burn more fat than just by cutting calories alone. However, adding dairy and cheese products to an existing diet, without making other modifications, will increase the total number of calories and can lead to weight gain.

Similar to most things in life, cheese, and other dairy products are beneficial when consumed in moderation. People who eat dairy products sensibly can reduce blood pressure and help prevent heart disease. Consuming cheese and dairy products can also prevent osteoporosis, colon cancer, and premenstrual symptoms.

In addition, certain cheeses, like Cheddar and Mozzarella, may also help prevent tooth decay.

Keep in mind that milk and cheese in the diet can make a significant contribution to calorie and fat intakes, but there are now plenty of low fat alternatives available, such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yogurts and reduced-fat cheeses.

While many people take calcium supplements, this is not as effective as eating the daily dosage. Foods that contain calcium also often contain other nutrients that aid in... [Download the Entire Newsletter in PDF format](#)

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