

## Low-Fat Dairy May Help Decrease Elevated Blood Pressure Risk

Published April 4, 2011

Consumption of low-fat dairy may help decrease the risk for elevated blood pressure and, regardless of fat content, fluid dairy foods (including milk and yogurt) are associated with a reduced risk of elevated blood pressure, according to a study published in the *Journal of Human Hypertension*.

Funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia, researchers at the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Southern Clinical School of Medicine, Monash University, Victoria, Australia, conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis examining the relationship between dairy food intake and the development of elevated blood pressure in adults by summarizing previously published observational studies.

“High blood pressure continues to be a critical concern for many Americans and populations around the world,” said Gregory Miller, PhD, president of the Rosemont, IL-based Dairy Research Institute and executive vice president of the National Dairy Council. “This latest review reinforces the value that dairy foods provide, by indicating that three servings of low-fat dairy products per day may help to reduce the risk of elevated blood pressure.”

The review compared the association of elevated blood pressure with consumption of low-fat dairy foods and high-fat dairy foods, as well as cheese and fluid dairy foods, like milk or yogurt. Authors searched seven databases and selected five cohort studies for inclusion, involving nearly 45,000 subjects and 11,500 cases of elevated blood pressure.

The authors concluded that dairy food consumption resulted in a significant reduction in the risk of elevated blood pressure. However, an analysis of full-fat dairy products including cheese, indicates neither an increased risk nor a decreased risk of elevated blood pressure. Regardless of fat content, fluid dairy foods (including low-fat and full-fat milk and yogurt) were associated with a reduced risk of developing elevated blood pressure.

Understanding this relationship between low-fat and fluid dairy foods and blood pressure can aid in the development of public health messages involving dairy foods and supports current government recommendations for dairy intake, the authors concluded.

The Australian review supports the suggestion that dairy can play a positive role in a balanced, healthy diet and lifestyle. According to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA): "Moderate evidence also indicates that intake of milk and milk products is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes and with lower blood pressure in adults."

According to Kevin Ponticelli, chair, Dairy Research Institute, and senior vice president of Dairy Management Inc., the Dairy Research Institute is escalating research efforts this year on dairy's impact on blood pressure, especially based on the DGA. "We are committed to deeper exploration of this relationship in order to help our industry partners fully understand dairy's benefits to address consumer needs and health."

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