

## Studies say dairy eases diabetes problems

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Dairy Research Institute funds research into health

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Two new studies are adding to the body of evidence that consuming three servings a day of dairy can help maintain metabolic health and reduce Type 2 diabetes.

"The fact that dairy could be part of the solution is really exciting," said Christopher Cifelli, director of nutrition research at the Dairy Research Institute, a nonprofit organization established through Dairy Management Inc., which manages the dairy producer checkoff program.

In a study funded by the institute through the dairy producer checkoff, researchers at the University of Tennessee conducted a clinical trial of 40 overweight and obese patients with compromised metabolic health. Those patients were randomly assigned either a low-dairy or adequate-dairy diet for 12 weeks.

"The study showed that adequate dairy (consumption) was able to reduce blood pressure and improve insulin sensitivity," Cifelli said.

Insulin is produced in response to eating glucose and helps the sugar get into cells so it can be used for energy, he said. People with decreased sensitivity either don't produce enough insulin or the insulin is not working properly, resulting in high blood sugar.

Improving insulin sensitivity enables the body to respond to insulin to allow sugar to enter cells, he said.

"The ability of dairy to improve insulin sensitivity is exciting, and the results of this study support the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which indicated the intake of milk and milk products is associated with a reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes in adults," he said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes, with 90 to 95 percent of those suffering from Type 2. About 79 million -- one-third of all adults -- are considered at risk or pre-diabetic.

Costs associated with diabetes in the U.S. are \$174 billion a year, Cifelli said. Worldwide, diabetes affects 347 million people.

In addition to the institute-funded study, Chinese researchers recently published the results of their systematic review and meta-analysis of seven studies examining the association between dairy consumption and Type 2 diabetes.

A meta-analysis helps determine the weight of evidence, using data from several studies, and is powerful, Cifelli said.

The analysis found that higher intake of dairy was associated with a significant reduction in risk of Type 2 diabetes, he said.

Specifically, low-fat dairy product consumption reduced the risk by 18 percent, and yogurt consumption reduced the risk by 17 percent.

"The most interesting finding is that each additional serving reduced the risk by 10 percent," he said.

"On average, people don't even consume two servings a day," Cifelli said. "For health and wellness reasons, there's still plenty of room for increased consumption."

Dairy Research Institute: [www.usdairy.com](http://www.usdairy.com)

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