


Low fat dairy consumption lowers diabetes risk in postmenopausal women, study

By Ben Bouckley, 18-Nov-2011

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A diet high in low-fat dairy products is associated with lower diabetes risk in postmenopausal women, particularly those who are obese, according to a new US research study.

Writing in the November issue of the *Journal of Nutrition*, Karen Margolis et al. also said that their data showed that high yogurt consumption was associated with a significant decrease in diabetes risk, but that there was no relationship between high-fat dairy product consumption and diabetes risk.

The scientists began upon the basis that previous studies suggested that consuming dairy products (and low-fat varieties), lowered the incidence of type-2 diabetes.

They wrote: *"However, no study to our knowledge has focused on an ethnically diverse group of postmenopausal women, a population with a high risk of this disease."*

According to American Diabetes Association estimates, 24m US citizens have diabetes and 1m more receive a new diagnosis of the disease each year.

Study design

Margolis et al. conducted a prospective cohort study of 82,076 postmenopausal women enrolled in the ongoing Women's Health Initiative Observational Study (WHI-OS) and enrolled therein from 1994-1998 and did not report diabetes at the time.

Participants' total, low-fat and high-fat dairy product and yogurt intakes were estimated via food frequency questionnaires (FFQ) at baseline and during 3 follow-up years.

Median intakes were 1.5 servings a day for all dairy products, 0.8 servings for low-fat dairy products and 0.4 servings for high-fat dairy products.

Yogurt consumption was reportedly low within the group, with median intake around 0.5 serving a week, while 38 per cent said they rarely or never consumed yogurt.

The scientists assessed treated diabetes levels from annual follow-up questionnaires, where over 8 years 3,946 cases of treated diabetes were reported (mean annual incidence 0.73 per cent, cumulative incidence 4.8 per cent).

