

Q. I'm allergic to dairy products. What is the best way for me to get calcium in my diet?

A. Many people don't tolerate dairy products well. Milk and other dairy products are the primary sources of protein, vitamin B-12, vitamin D (added to milk), potassium, and calcium – key nutrients in the typical American diet.

The DASH diet recommends 2-3 servings of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products daily. A serving is one cup of milk or yogurt, 1.5 oz of low-fat cheese, or ½ cup of cottage cheese. Every glass of whole milk contains the equivalent of a pat and a half of butter (which is high in saturated fat and cholesterol). When you choose skim milk, you cut out nearly all of the saturated fat and cholesterol and you still get the protein, calcium, and most other key nutrients milk provides.

Harvard's research in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professional Follow-up Study (where over 100,000 people were studied for more than 12 years) showed that eating high intakes of dairy increased the risk of prostate cancer



got calcium?

in men and ovarian cancer in women. Thus, Harvard's nutrition guidelines recommend just 1-2 servings of dairy daily.

If you don't drink milk, it is important to get these key nutrients from other sources. One of the easiest ways is to drink fortified soy milk (with added calcium, B-12, and vitamin D). Soy milk is also a good source of protein.

(Only buy brands with at least 7 grams of protein per serving.)

Other good sources of non-dairy calcium include calcium-fortified orange juice, tofu (with calcium used to make it a solid), and dark green vegetables, such as kale and broccoli. You can also take a daily calcium supplement with vitamin D. If you are a vegetarian, you should probably also take a B-12 supplement. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables helps you get plenty of potassium. Basically, you don't have to drink milk to have a healthy diet.

