



## The Health Benefits of Dairy



Consuming dairy products from cows can have substantial health benefits. As most people know, cow's milk contains a fair amount of calcium which aids bone health. But milk contains several other beneficial components like protein, vitamin A, and vitamin D. Let's learn more about what milk is made of and how it keeps us healthy!

Milk contains 9 essential nutrients that work in our bodies to provide nourishment and strength. Calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin D help to strengthen our bones and generate energy; protein is another source of energy. Potassium helps us to maintain a healthy blood pressure and Vitamin B12 keeps our red blood cells healthy. Vitamin A helps us maintain a healthy immune system, good vision, and fresh, clean skin. Riboflavin also known as B2 converts food into energy in our bodies, without B2 we would experience fatigue, mood change, and even dermatitis. Finally, niacin helps our bodies metabolize sugars and fatty acids.

Besides these key nutrients, whole milk can be linked to the prevention of weight gain by helping us to feel fuller longer. Whole milk provides a good amount of protein which is converted into energy our bodies can use.

Milk is also versatile! It can be added to many parts of our diets from delicious breakfast smoothies to savory soups. Not to mention, yogurt which boasts its own health benefits like good gut bacteria and a hearty dose of protein.

So, go have a glass of milk or a yummy smoothie, it's good for you!



## Did You Know?

### There are two genetic variations of milk?

Cow's milk contains many proteins, and the largest group of those proteins is called casein. There are different types of casein in milk, the second largest group of these is called beta-casein and it's where the genetic variation happens.

The two common forms of beta-casein are A1 and A2. Some breeds of cattle produce more of these beta-caseins than others. For example, Holstein and British Shorthorn breeds produce milk with more A1 beta-casein where Jersey and Guernsey breeds produce more milk with A2 beta-casein. But, what does that really mean?

Most milk we buy from the grocery store contains both A1 and A2 beta-caseins. However, farms can breed their herd to produce A2 milk solely. Why bother? A2 milk has been studied and found to be easier to digest by those who have dairy intolerance. Commonly we think of lactose as being the cause of discomfort from dairy consumption but there is some research suggesting other components of milk may be causing some or all discomfort in some people. It is thought that because A2 milk contains different proteins that it may have a lesser effect on those who drink only A2 milk.



Billings Farm has had its milk tested and it is exclusively A2 milk, so all of our dairy products are easier to digest for people with dairy sensitivities. Our milk is processed and bottled by [Norwich Farm Creamery](#), including Creamline Milk and Chocolate Milk, available at a number of stores in the region, and through Billings Farm.

**Happy milk drinking!**

## Different Dairy Animals Around the World

When we think about dairy most of us probably think about cows, namely the Holstein cows or the black and white spotted cows. And you'd be right to think so. Holsteins produce the most milk out of any dairy animal in the world! But we know at Billings Farm there are other dairy producers like our herd of Jersey cattle who produce richer and fattier milk than Holsteins.

Cows aren't the only milk producers though. Around the world people milk goats, sheep, yaks, buffalo, horses, and camels. In Vermont and New England, goat and sheep dairy is most common after cows.



Goats produce 2% of the world's milk and are on every continent except Antarctica. Goat milk contains smaller fat globules than cow's milk which means it is naturally homogenized, the fat doesn't separate. This fact makes goat's milk better tolerated by some who have trouble digesting cow's milk. In their prime, goats can produce up to a gallon of milk a day during their 10-month lactation. Often, goat milk is turned into butter, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. *Chevre* is French for goat cheese and is popular among those who are less tolerant of dairy due to its lower fat levels.

Goats' milk is also used to make soaps and lotions. Because the milk is naturally homogenized it stays smooth and creamy through production.

Sheep are more commonly thought of as wool producing animals but there are several breeds specifically for dairy production. Assaf, Sarda, and British Milking Sheep are some breeds that produce milk. These breeds can produce up to a half gallon of milk a day during their 180-day lactation. Sheep milk can be turned into cheese, yogurt, and even liqueur! Cheeses like Feta, Roquefort, and pecorino Romano are all sheep milk products. The White Sheep Co. in New Zealand raises and milks sheep to produce liqueurs like gin and cream liqueur. They use an intricate process of adding yeast, brewing, and fermenting to create their truly unique product.

Yak milk is popular in western China and Mongolia where the weather tends to be too cold for cows. Yaks are very cold weather tolerant and most of the milk products people consume in those areas are from yaks. Yak milk is high in protein and can be turned into butter as well.



Buffalo are the predominant dairy animal in India and Pakistan. Their milk contains more fat, protein, and lactose than cow's milk, so it yields more butter, cream, and cheese.

Horse milk is consumed mostly in Central Asia and Russia. Horse milk, often called mare's milk, is very similar to human milk and in some countries, it is a substitute for children who are intolerant of cow's milk.



Camel milk is used in some African countries and Australia. It is thought to be the closest animal dairy to human milk and is full of immune-boosting proteins. Camel milk is also exclusively A2 making it easier to digest by those who are intolerant of cow's milk. Desert Farms distributes camel milk in the US by working with individual farms who milk camels and processing and packaging their products. You can learn more about them or even buy some milk here: <https://desertfarms.com/>.

Dairy farming can look very different depending on what country you're in!  
You never know what you might find out there!

## Quick Strawberry Banana Smoothie



### Ingredients:

- A couple fresh or frozen strawberries
- Half a banana, fresh or frozen
- Milk
- Yogurt
- Ice (optional)

1. Cut the strawberries and banana into 1” cubes.
2. Add fruit to your blender.
3. Add a few scoops of your choice of yogurt. You can use regular, probiotic, or Greek.
4. Top with milk. You want to add enough milk so the blender can blend smoothly.
5. Optional: add ice if you want a cool treat!
6. Blend and enjoy!

These are great for breakfast on-the-go or a midafternoon treat!