

DAIRY

THE SCOOP ON DAIRY

The dairy industry spends a fortune to make us think that we will die without milk. They create flashy campaigns featuring celebs with milk mustaches and they claim that milk is the only way to get calcium. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Most dairy in the US comes from factory farms, where cows are fed products not natural to their diet, such as grain, corn and soy. They are also injected with rBGH (recombinant Bovine growth hormone), which is a bioengineered hormone that forces the cows to produce more milk than their bodies normally would. It has been linked to early puberty in girls and hormonal problems in adult women. This over stimulation of the cow's udder causes it to become infected, thus requiring antibiotics. As a result, these added hormones and antibiotics reside in the milk, which interfere with the female hormonal system - most notably changing the way hormones are metabolized in the bowel and ultimately changing our hormonal levels.

I've done a lot of experimentation on myself and watched my clients do the same. For the most part, people do well on very little or no dairy. Just my own anecdotal evidence and what I hear from other practitioners. For myself, when I stopped consuming pasteurized cow milk products years ago, my period pain pretty much disappeared. However, there are a lot of factors that play a role - how and where we were raised, along with your specific hormonal imbalance, how good your gut health is and what type of dairy is being consumed.

For instance, if someone has compromised intestinal permeability, or "leaky gut", it's more likely that their immune system will respond to potentially allergenic components in milk. This is especially true for people who are gluten intolerant, because it has been shown that milk proteins commonly cross-react with gluten. Put another way, if you react to gluten, it's more likely that you'll also react to milk.

Along these same lines, people with small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) - which is one of the major causes of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) - may be more likely to react to milk because the bacteria in their small intestine aggressively ferments lactose, the sugar in milk, causing gas, bloating and other G.I. symptoms. This brings me to the type of dairy being consumed and something called A1 casein - a protein found in milk that stimulates the production of inflammatory cytokines in many people, contributing to a cascade of menstrual and reproductive issues like acne, endometriosis and period pain. In fact, removing A1 milk products improves endometriosis symptoms every time in my experience.

According to Dr. Lara Briden, A1 casein is found only in the milk of Holstein (Friesian) cows, which are the predominant herds in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. There is very little A1 casein in the milk from Jersey cows, goats, and sheep. Also there is very little A1 casein in heavy cream, butter, or ricotta (a whey cheese)—so those foods are usually Ok. Milk cows in Africa, Asia, Iceland and southern

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Europe make milk with mostly A2 casein. She goes on to say that women who experienced ear infections, tonsilitis and upper respiratory conditions as children are likely affected by A1 casein. So if these were chronic issues for you as a child this might apply to you. I think it's up to you to experiment with this and see but in the meantime, take this evidence into consideration.

1. There are over 60 hormones found in milk and research links them to an increase in breast cancer and acne.
2. Other research suggests that the lactose (milk sugar) in dairy may have a toxic effect on the ovaries. Ovarian cancer is highest in countries where dairy consumption is highest (Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland) and lowest in Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore.
3. Galactose, a sugar produced during the digestion of dairy, has been associated with ovarian cancer. It is most prevalent in milk products that have not been fermented, and a lot less prevalent in milk products that are fermented.
4. RBGH is not approved for use in either Canada or the European Union due to animal welfare concerns and human health. In 1989, the EU banned all meat from animals treated with steroid and growth hormones. This ban is still in effect today.
5. Removing the fat from milk has actually been shown to cause an imbalance of hormones throughout the body, causing a failure to ovulate. Scientists have found that women who eat full fat dairy have a 27% lower risk of infertility. Women who ate low fat milk products twice a day were found to be twice as likely to not ovulate. This is one reason I don't recommend low fat milk products but there are many more.

If you do consume milk products (only a little bit!) make sure they are full fat, raw and organic, without rBGH, antibiotics or pesticides and they come from grass-fed cows. Raw milk has not been through pasteurization and homogenization, which means that it is much easier to digest because it's molecular structure has not been altered. In addition to that, all the naturally occurring vitamins, minerals and enzymes are still intact in raw milk. Also consider sheep and goat's milk products, as they may be much easier to digest than cow's milk.

Dairy Substitutes

I recommend using almond milk, rice milk, oat milk, coconut milk, hemp milk or any other nut milk (especially if they are freshly made).