



**For the week of  
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**Editor:**

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## Dairy products may help weight loss

**I crave the rich, creamy taste of dairy products like cheese and ice cream, but I don't want to get as big as a cow. What can I do?**

Eat those dairy products 'til your heart's content, say researchers, as long as they're low fat. The calcium in these foods may actually help you lose weight, not gain it.

Recent research conducted at the University of Tennessee found that increasing dietary calcium could increase the loss of weight and body fat by 50 to 70 percent. Results showed that a high level of calcium limits the ability of fat cells to acquire and store fat during periods of overconsumption (i.e., Christmas dinner) and accelerates fat and weight loss during caloric restriction (i.e., your New Year's resolution diet).

Researchers studied obese mice and put them on a calorie-restricted diet. The group of mice that were fed a low calcium diet actually gained weight faster, while the group fed a low-fat, high calcium diet had a 60 to 69 percent weight loss. These results were supported by research from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey that showed individuals who consumed large amounts of dairy products had a much smaller chance of being obese.

To get these weight-loss results, researchers suggest you get about 1,200 mg of calcium a day, which is about three glasses of milk or 3 to 4 servings of low-fat, calcium-rich foods. Conveniently, that's the same amount of calcium that the USDA already recommends for adult minimum consumption.

But don't start stocking up on Chunky Monkey just yet. Experts stress that low-fat calcium sources like skim milk and low-fat yogurt provide the best weight-loss results. Calorie and fat content must be considered when working dairy products into your diet.

Also, calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice and cereal may be convenient, but these synthetic sources of calcium are not absorbed as efficiently as nature's preferred calcium source – dairy products, which also deliver a whole host of beneficial vitamins and minerals from riboflavin to vitamins A and D. And to make good news even better, recent studies have shown calcium may reduce high blood pressure, ease PMS symptoms and possibly lower the risk of developing colon cancer.

Ahhh, the power of calcium.

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