

Calcium and Weight Loss: A Little Known Secret For Losing Weight

April 17, 2000 -- Got milk? New research suggests you should if you want to lose weight. The study shows that calcium -- three or four daily servings of low-fat dairy products -- can help adjust your body's fat-burning machinery.

The key is low-fat dairy sources, says lead author Hang Shi, a postdoctoral student in the Nutrition Institute at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. "High-fat dietary calcium can establish obesity, but it's surprising that low-fat calcium may help reduce body fat,

Currently, the weight-loss effect of calcium has been receiving a great deal of attention. More exciting is that reliable scientific research has been catching up with the observation

Research Shows...

A 2003 study showed subjects who consumed three servings of Yoplait Light yogurt daily as part of a reduced-calorie diet lost about 20 percent more weight than those who cut calories alone.

The yogurt-eaters consumed around 1,100 mg of calcium daily. The non-yogurt eaters consumed about 500 mg of calcium a day (the average amount in the typical American's diet).

Calcium helps reduce body fat :

* Calcium increases the amount of sympathetic nervous system (SNS) stimulation. Your SNS is part of your "fight or flight" response which usually speeds things up. Calcium intake can lead to an increase in metabolism.

* High calcium levels create a binding to fat resulting in a lower fat absorption. When less fat is absorbed more is excreted.

How much calcium is enough?

* Studies show that optimal [weight loss](#) occurs in individuals who consume around 1200 mg per day along with a low fat diet.

* You should attempt to get the minimum recommended 1000 mg per day from low or non fat dairy foods.

More Calcium Helps Burn Body Fat

Edward Melanson, PhD, and James Hill, PhD, examined diet data from 35 healthy, non-obese adults during a 24-hour period and measured their daily energy expenditures. They found that those individuals who consumed more calcium used more fat as fuel compared to those with lower calcium intakes.

The idea that calcium intake may be related to body weight has been supported by several studies in the past decade. Studies in rats and mice suggest that higher calcium intake alters the metabolism of fat cells, causing less fat to be stored and more fat to be released. Whether this also occurs in humans was not known.

Milk and Health

Milk became a headline topper in June when a study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health revealed that a diet rich in milk doesn't actually increase the risk of heart disease and stroke -- and may even help to prevent them! In the study, men who drank the most milk every day (more than a pint) were found to have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke than those who drank the least (less than half a pint).

About the Author

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