



Dairy

Dairy products include milk and food products made from milk such as cheese and yogurt. Cheese is produced by coagulation of the protein in milk. Yogurt is produced by bacterial fermentation of milk.

Modern dairy farming began in the early 1900's with the introduction of pasteurization which destroys bacteria that causes milk to spoil. This process extended the shelf-life of milk and allowed it to be shipped farther. Dairy farms have grown over the years to meet the growing demand for dairy products. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 98% of U. S. dairy farms are family owned and operated.



Did you know?



Pennsylvania ranks 7th in the U.S. in total milk production, with 500,000 cows producing more than 10.2 billion pounds of milk annually.



The average cow produces 8 gallons of milk per day. That's more than 100 glasses of milk.



There are approximately 2,000 varieties of cheese.

It takes 10 pounds of milk to make one pound of cheese.



Yogurt provides probiotics, or good bacteria, that may help maintain digestive health.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends 2½ cups of low-fat or fat free milk and dairy foods daily for those 4–8 years old and 3 cups for those 9 years and older.

Selection and Storage

(The following tips are excerpted from “Keep Your Dairy and Egg Products Safe” by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics — <https://www.eatright.org/homefoodsafety/safety-tips/food/keep-your-dairy-and-egg-products-safe>).

- Select milk and other dairy products toward the end of your grocery shopping trip so they spend less time at room temperature.
- Do not store milk in the refrigerator door where it is exposed to warmer air from opening and closing the door.
- When selecting milk, make sure the lid is tightly sealed to avoid off odors or flavors.
- Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products as raw products can contain harmful bacteria.
- Wrap hard cheeses in wax or parchment paper and an outer layer of plastic wrap to keep fresh. They can last for three to four weeks in the refrigerator after opening.
- Soft cheeses should be consumed within one week after opening.
- For yogurt, check the “best by” date on the carton and use within one to two weeks after purchasing it.





Tip: Milk that includes the PA Preferred logo is sourced entirely from Pennsylvania farmers. If it does not include the PA Preferred logo, look for the plant code. If this code begins with “42” this indicates that the milk is processed in Pennsylvania and sourced predominantly from Pennsylvania dairy farms.



Nutrition

Nutrients provided by dairy products include calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Dairy products are the primary source of calcium in American diets. Calcium is important in building bones and teeth and maintaining bone mass. Potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. It also helps maintain cell growth and normal water levels in the body. Vitamin D helps to maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorus in the body, thereby helping to build and maintain bones. Protein is an important building block of muscles, bones, skin, and blood.

Healthy Dairy Ideas

- Sprinkle a small amount of tangy cheese (like parmesan) on vegetables or other side dishes.
- Use a spoonful of plain low fat or fat-free yogurt instead of sour cream.
- Top fruit salads with low-fat yogurt.
- Try fat-free or low-fat ricotta or cottage cheese in casseroles like lasagna.
- Flavored yogurts are often high in added sugar. Buy low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt and add fruit and/or whole grain cereal for flavor and crunch.



Recipe | Creamy Vegetable Dip

Makes 12 servings

Ingredients	Measure	Directions
Yogurt, low-fat plain (or small curd or creamed cottage cheese)	2 cups	1. In a medium-sized bowl, combine yogurt (or cottage cheese), pepper, garlic powder, dried onion, dried parsley, salt, and dill (if used). Beat until smooth.
Black pepper	¼ teaspoon	
Garlic powder	½ teaspoon	
Dried, minced onion	2 tablespoons	
Dried parsley flakes	1 tablespoon	
Salt	(½ teaspoon, optional)	
Dill weed	(½ teaspoon, optional)	
		2. Chill dip in refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve with raw vegetables.

Notes: Suggested approximately 6 cups of vegetables for serving including: broccoli florets, cauliflower florets, carrot sticks, celery sticks, jicama, sliced bell pepper, or sliced cucumber.

Source: Colorado State University and University of California at Davis. *Eating Smart Being Active Recipes*.



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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