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[Should You Be Wary of Dairy?](#)



If you kept a nutritional journal for even a few days, you would probably discover that dairy is among the top five products consumed daily in your household. This is troubling because more and more people are finding that dairy (and more specifically a substance in dairy and other products called casein) may be a contributing factor to allergy reactions and behavioral problems in those sensitive to it. Here are a few things to think about next time you're strolling through the dairy aisle.

Many people who assume they are allergic to milk may actually be suffering from a casein allergy. The complicating factor causing a lack of awareness as to the true allergy is that casein is found in more than just dairy products. As a binding agent, it has technical uses as well as edible; it can be found in paints (including fingernail polish), other cosmetics and even glue (or industrial adhesives).

In 2000, a clinical study by [FitzGerald and Bundesanstalt](#) determined that there is a "natural opiate" embedded in casein protein, which may lead to the "comfort feeling" after digestion. This may be a contributing factor to cravings for chocolate and cheese unrelated to hunger.

Studies including those by Dr. Karl Reichel, of The National Hospital in Norway, and Dr. Robert Cade, of the University of Florida, have found high amounts of the casomorphin peptide in urine samples taken from people with conditions ranging from autism to post-partum depression (PPD) to celiac disease to schizophrenia. It has been suggested that this peptide may

also be elevated in other similar disorders such as chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and depression, based on the reported benefits of a gluten-free and casein-free diet.

While casein is most certainly a concern, it's not the sole problem with milk. [A large study led by Catherine S. Berkey](#) of Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston revealed that consumption of milk may be contributing to the growing problem of childhood obesity. And Dr. Robert Kradjian, chief of breast surgery at Seton Medical Center in northern California, reviewed archives of medical and scientific journals and found that milk is not the "perfect food" it is reported to be. He found that many common childhood disorders were, if not induced, certainly aggravated by an increased intake of dairy products, including but not limited to allergies, ear and tonsil infections, bed-wetting, asthma, intestinal bleeding (lesions), colic and childhood diabetes.

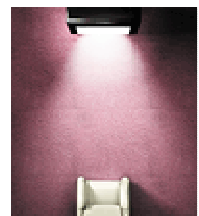
Fortunately, these days it's increasingly possible to substitute when necessary. When a recipe calls for 1 cup of milk, try replacing it with 1 cup of soy, rice or coconut milk or 1 cup of water mixed with 1 egg yolk. If a recipe calls for a cup of yogurt, consider the following substitutions: 1 cup of soy yogurt or soy sour cream, 1 cup of unsweetened applesauce or 1 cup of pureed fruit.

Consuming dairy products is a matter of choice, of course, but with the potential for allergic reactions, the high fat content and the problems with casein, it's good to know that there are other choices. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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[TV Linked to Depression](#)

There are drawbacks to our increasing dependence on the boob tube, some of which have been documented via research. Studies show that the more television children watch, the more likely they are to become overweight and to have problems with attention span. And according to a recent study involving adolescents, excessive television viewing can do something else: increase the risk of suffering depression, an all-too-common condition with potentially serious consequences.



According to the study, adolescents who reported "more television use had significantly greater odds of developing depression [for each additional hour of daily television use](#). In addition, those reporting more total media exposure had significantly greater odds of developing depression for each additional hour of daily use."

Interestingly enough, the researchers did not find the same relationship to depression for adolescents who were exposed to videocassettes, computer games, or radio. For parents, that's an important distinction, because it means that reducing your children's overall exposure to

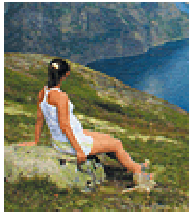
these items apparently won't cut it; if they're spending excessive time watching TV, reducing that time is what needs to happen to reduce your children's risk of suffering depression.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children be exposed to no more than one to two hours of "total media time" per day. Isn't that a good idea for everyone, regardless of age? We should send this article to the Boston Red Sox and have them speed it up! I know that watching one of their games can sometimes be depressing!

[Talk to your doctor to learn more.](#)

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Master the Art of Meditation



Many people find meditation beneficial in managing stress, reaching mental tranquility, focusing attention and maintaining an overall healthier lifestyle. In fact, the results of more than 1,000 peer-reviewed articles on meditation suggest that regular practice of meditation is associated with "significant relief from a variety of stress related physical and mental problems, a stronger immune system, longer life, increased energy and positive changes in brain function."

If you have never meditated before, why not give it a try? It might seem awkward at first, but if you stick to it, you will find yourself enjoying it more and more. There are many types of meditation, all of which help lead you toward greater mental and physical tranquility and a sense of focus.

The following are some suggestions as an introduction to the practice of meditation.

- Choose a relaxing, low-light location free from distractions. Remember, this is uninterrupted "you" time.
- Sit comfortably on the floor, in a chair with your back straight, or perhaps in your garden or your favorite quiet space, which could be near the ocean, a lake or any other relaxing body of water.
- Close your eyes and slowly take deep breaths.
- Try to focus only on your breathing, the rise and fall of your abdomen, and how the air feels as each breath goes in and comes out.
- As external thoughts start to pass through your mind, calmly acknowledge them and bring your focus back to the sensation of your breathing.
- End your session by opening your eyes and allowing yourself to gently return to your normal daily routine feeling relaxed and refreshed.

And that's the simple, relaxing, invigorating art of meditation! If you're experiencing stress or any other condition that requires you "take it a little easier," meditation may be a perfect place to start.

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