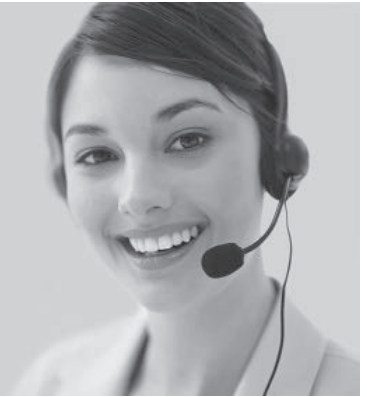


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘Dairy Products and Your Blood Pressure.’ I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



Most of us know that milk, yogurt, and cheese help us build and keep strong bones. But did you know that dairy products also help lower blood pressure?

Dairy products are **rich in protein, potassium, magnesium, and calcium**. Your heart and blood vessels need these nutrients to stay healthy. That’s why dairy products are a **key part of the DASH diet**. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It has been shown to lower blood pressure in as little as two weeks.

The dairy products in DASH are **fat-free or low in fat (1%)**. Whole or 2% (reduced-fat) dairy products are high in saturated fat and cholesterol, which raise your risk of heart attack or stroke.

The DASH goal for dairy products is **2-3 servings per day**. The guide below shows the amount in one serving. Note the fat gram limit.

Food	Amount in One Serving	Fat Per Serving
Milk, nonfat (skim) or low-fat (1%)	1 cup (8 fluid ounces)	No more than 3 grams
Yogurt, nonfat or low-fat	1 cup (8 ounces)	No more than 3 grams
Cottage cheese, no salt, nonfat or low-fat	½ cup (4 ounces)	No more than 2 grams
Ricotta cheese, nonfat or low-fat	2 tablespoons (1 ounce)	No more than 2 grams
Hard cheese (check the label for sodium)	1½ ounces	No more than 8 grams per 1½ ounces or 5 grams per ounce

Note:

- Check food labels for sodium and added sugars, too. Choose foods with less sodium and added sugar.



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- The foods below are not part of DASH. They are not high enough in protein and blood pressure friendly minerals.
 - Regular, nonfat, or low-fat cream, half and half, cream cheese, or sour cream

What if you prefer whole or 2% milk, yogurt, and cheese?

Keep in mind that it takes time for your taste buds to adjust to nonfat or low-fat products. Follow these tips:

- Read Nutrition Facts labels on milk, cheese, and yogurt. Compare the amount of saturated fat and total fat.
- Choose the lowest fat versions that taste good to you now. This will make it easier for you to eat them often.
- As your tastes adjust, move from whole to reduced-fat (2%) milk, yogurt, and cheese. Finally move on to low-fat (1%) and fat-free versions.
- Try mixing the milk you are used to with one that's lower in fat. Then slowly step down to less and less fat. For example, mix whole milk with the same amount of 2% milk. Next mix 2% with 1%. Then mix 1% with nonfat. Then move on to all nonfat milk.

Ways to Eat More Nonfat or Low-Fat Milk and Dairy Foods

Do you already eat two to three servings of dairy products per day? If not, think about how you could eat two to three servings. Check the ideas below that you might like to try.

- Drink nonfat or low-fat milk with meals.
- Eat whole grain cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk for breakfast or as a snack.
- Add nonfat dry milk to hot cereal.
- Make smoothies. In a blender, mix: nonfat/low-fat yogurt, chopped fresh or frozen fruit (such as berries and bananas), and a small amount of 100% fruit juice. Blend.
- Add nonfat dry milk to homemade, low-sodium waffle or pancake batters.
- Eat nonfat yogurt or nonfat or low-fat cheese with fruit for desserts or as a snack.
- Add sliced or shredded nonfat or low-fat cheese (check the sodium) to foods. Examples: eggs, grits, sandwiches, salads, low-sodium soups, vegetables, or main dishes.



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- Use nonfat or low-fat plain yogurt instead of sour cream. Try this on baked potatoes and in dips, sauces, salad dressings, and baked products.
- Make homemade, low-sodium creamed soups such as broccoli or potato. Use nonfat or low-fat milk instead of cream.

Do you have trouble digesting milk and milk products? If so, try taking lactase enzyme pills with milk products. You can find these pills at grocery stores and drug stores. Or buy lactose-free milk. It has the enzyme already added to it. You may be able to handle regular milk products if you eat only a small amount at a time. Also, some people can handle yogurt or cheese but not milk.

In general, calcium supplements are an option for people who can't digest or are allergic to milk or dairy products. But calcium supplements interact with some common blood pressure medicines. This makes the medicines work less well. Talk with your doctor before taking calcium supplements.

Take Action

Make a one-day plan to eat two to three servings of nonfat/low-fat dairy foods per day.

	Nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt, and cheese	
	Servings	Examples (food or drink, amount)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Totals	2 to 3	

Make a plan for moving toward the above long-term goal this week. *Be specific.* For example, "On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday this week, I will add nonfat yogurt and fresh fruit to my whole grain breakfast cereal. I will also use nonfat milk."



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