

Dairy and Adults 19-59 Years

Supporting Strength & Vitality

Good nutrition in adulthood lays the foundation for strength, energy and long-term health. Dairy foods — including milk, cheese and yogurt — deliver high-quality protein, calcium and other essential nutrients that help support muscle maintenance, bone strength, cardiometabolic health and overall wellness. Achieving peak bone mass in early adulthood is a critical step toward aging with vitality, and dairy's unique nutrient package can help set the stage.¹ Regular consumption of dairy foods is also associated with a reduced risk of several chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes — reinforcing dairy's role as a nutrient-dense powerhouse that supports health across the lifespan.^{2,3}



Dairy's Unique Contributions

Adulthood often becomes about greater demands — at home, at work and in family life. To live their best life, many people seek practical, nutrient-dense foods to help support energy and overall well-being. Dairy foods can play a meaningful role in supporting healthy diets to nourish adulthood.



Inflammation: Research consistently shows that milk, cheese and yogurt do not promote inflammation, and some evidence suggests dairy foods may even help reduce markers of chronic inflammation.⁴⁻⁸



Immune health: A healthy immune system supports overall wellness. Dairy foods can provide key nutrients that contribute to immune function, including protein, vitamins A, D and B12, zinc and selenium.⁹



Recommended Daily Dairy Servings



3 servings^{10*}

**3 servings of dairy are recommended based on a daily calorie level of 1,600 calories or more. See backside for what counts as a serving of dairy. There are a variety of ways to enjoy milk, cheese and yogurt to meet the recommended daily servings.*

Special Considerations



Fermented dairy: It's more than a "gut feeling." Fermented dairy foods like yogurt and kefir with live cultures can help support digestive and microbiome health, helping maintain a healthy gut barrier and promote microbial balance.¹¹ Fermented dairy foods, including certain cheeses, also contain unique bioactives formed during the fermentation process that may contribute to overall health.¹²



Lactose: Lactose intolerance is a condition to take seriously. The good news is there are strategies that may help people with lactose intolerance enjoy the benefits of dairy foods without discomfort. For example, lactose-free dairy milk, dairy foods with minimal or no lactose like hard cheeses (such as Cheddar) or yogurt or kefir with live and active cultures that help digest the lactose are all potential ways to incorporate dairy foods into a lower-lactose or lactose-free eating style.





Try this Recipe

Turkish Eggs with Greek Yogurt and Sautéed Spinach

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- 8 small cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 slices whole-grain bread, toasted



Instructions:

1. Bring a small pot of water to a simmer. Break eggs, one at a time, into a small dish or ramekin. Carefully add eggs, one at a time, to water. Cook eggs until whites are set and yolks begin to thicken, 3-5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer eggs to a plate lined with a paper towel.
2. Combine yogurt and lemon juice in a bowl and whisk until smooth.
3. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, red pepper flakes and paprika and cook, stirring constantly for 30 seconds. Add spinach and cook until wilted and coated.
4. To serve, divide Greek yogurt mixture evenly between two shallow bowls. Top each bowl with half of the spinach mixture and nestle an egg in the center. Garnish with tomatoes and basil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately with toasted bread.

Sources

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Make Every Bite & Sip Count



Pair dairy with plant-based foods. Dairy foods and plant foods bring different nutrients to the table and complement each other's flavors and textures. Think apple slices and Cheddar cheese, yogurt topped with berries and nuts, tomatoes baked with feta or whole-grain oatmeal made with milk.



Lean into yogurt's versatility to enhance everyday meals. It can serve as the base for dips, dressings and marinades. Plain, thick yogurt – like Greek – and Icelandic-style varieties – is a versatile topping for tacos, stews, soups or sandwiches.

What Counts as a Serving of Dairy?

	Milk: 1 cup
	Lactose-free Milk: 1 cup
	Yogurt: ¾ cup
	Kefir: 1 cup
	American Cheese: 1 oz
	Shredded Cheese: ¼ cup
	Hard Cheese: 1 oz
	Ricotta Cheese: ¼ cup
	Cottage Cheese: ½ cup
	Fortified Dairy Alternatives: 1 cup

**Serving sizes are based on the Daily Servings by Calorie Level supplement to the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed as defined by the Food and Drug Administration.*

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Milk, yogurt and cheese are nutrient-dense foods that can help nourish people throughout life. Dairy foods, including lactose-free varieties, are nutritious and accessible options that can help fill nutrient gaps and contribute to healthy eating patterns. To learn more about how dairy foods help people thrive across the lifespan, visit usdairy.com.