

## Milk—It Does a Body (And Your Waistline) Good

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(NAPS)—Widening waistlines are a concern for most Americans, but new research shows that we all have much to gain and more inches to lose by including more milk in our daily diets.

It's time to start thinking about eating better. About half of all African American women are considered obese, and therefore more likely at risk for developing diseases such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes.

In addition, many African Americans fall short of meeting daily nutritional needs. For example, more than 75 percent of African Americans fail to meet current calcium recommendations. The common misconception that all African Americans are lactose intolerant has led many to avoid milk and dairy products, which are the highest dietary sources of calcium.

The good news is that small changes in your diet can lead to big changes in your health. One step to slimming your waistline and getting the nutrients you need may be as easy as drinking a glass of milk. It's no secret that milk provides nine essential vitamins and nutrients, such as calcium and vitamin D, but new research from the University of Tennessee shows that dairy foods may also help you lose weight and body fat, especially in your stomach area.

The study consisted of obese African American adults who typically drank little or no milk. Researchers found that when the

number of servings of milk and milk products was increased to three per day, participants lost more body fat than those who drank only one glass or less. Plus, they preserved lean muscle mass. The research also found that when participants increased their dairy servings to three and reduced total calories by 500 per day, they lost about twice as much weight and body fat.

If you do not already drink the recommended three servings of milk a day, now there's another good reason to start. Adding more milk to your diet is relatively easy. Below are simple ways to incorporate milk into your daily routine.

- Start your day with cereal and milk for breakfast.
- Instead of black coffee, enjoy a skim latte made with milk.
- Make a delicious smoothie with milk, your favorite fruit and ice.
- Have a glass of milk at bedtime (and sleep like a baby!).
- If you think you have symptoms of lactose intolerance, see your doctor or dietitian to help determine how much milk you can drink with little discomfort.
- Try lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk since they contain all the same nutrients, including calcium, as regular milk.

As a registered dietitian, I constantly remind my patients of the important nutritional and health benefits of calcium. Choosing three servings of foods naturally high in calcium, such as milk and other dairy foods, helps to meet daily dietary requirements. Now, with the added possibility of trimming a stubborn waistline, enjoying milk provides an additional "bonus."

Courtesy of Valentine's Photography



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