Navigating the Supermarket:  Dairy and Eggs

Use this guide to find the most nutritious choices in the supermarket.

**Dairy**

Like meat, dairy foods can be very high in saturated fat. This can increase your cholesterol and risk of heart disease. Many consumers are replacing whole milk with low-fat or nonfat milk. However, our consumption of high-fat cheese, cream, and ice cream is still high. If you choose to eat dairy foods, it is important to choose lower fat choices.

If you do not or cannot eat dairy, there are other options available. These include fortified soymilk or juice or multivitamin/mineral supplements. Dairy is an important source of calcium and vitamin D. If you do not eat meat, it probably supplies most of your vitamin B₁₂ as well. Be sure that you obtain these nutrients from other sources.

**Milk.** Choose skim (nonfat) or 1% (low-fat) milk since it is lower in calories, fat, and saturated fat. Despite the name, buttermilk is actually a low-fat option because it is usually made with cultured skim or low-fat milk.

**Soy milk.** Soy milk is a beverage that is produced by mixing ground soybeans with water to form a milk-like liquid. It can be consumed as a beverage or used in recipes as a substitute for cow’s milk. Look for soy milk in the dairy case of your local supermarket. Choose a variety that has at least 20% Daily Value for calcium and vitamin D such as Silk or EdenSoy. Plain varieties have less sugar than vanilla or chocolate varieties.

**Yogurt.** Yogurt can be a great source of calcium, vitamin D, and friendly bacteria that improve digestion. However, most cartons of commercial yogurt are very high in sugar. For example, one six ounce cup may contain as much as 28 grams of sugar. This is almost double the amount in a half-cup serving of ice cream. As a healthier alternative, choose plain non-fat yogurt and mix it with sliced fruit. If you need a little sweetness, add a teaspoon of sugar. It will still be much less than the commercial varieties.
Cheese. Cheese is very high in saturated fat. Beef and cheese are actually the top two sources of saturated fat in the American diet. Choose reduced-fat or lower-fat cheeses more often. When a recipe calls for cheese, use sharp flavors and use it sparingly. For example, sharp cheddar, feta, Parmesan, and gorgonzola have strong flavors so you can use less.

Dairy products. Cottage cheese, cream cheese, and sour cream contain much less calcium and vitamin D than other dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. Use lower-fat versions and use them sparingly.

Frozen dairy. Read labels carefully on frozen dairy products such as ice cream. Some premium brands are extremely high in calories, fat, and saturated fat. As a healthier alternative, choose sliced fruit with a small scoop of lower-fat ice cream, frozen yogurt, or sorbet.

Cream. Limit heavy cream, coffee creamer, and whipped cream because they are higher in calories, fat, and saturated fat. Use healthier alternatives, such as evaporated skim milk or low-fat milk.

Eggs
Eggs are an inexpensive source of protein and nutrients, such as vitamins A, D, E, choline, and selenium. If omega-3 fats were added to the feed of the hen then the eggs may also contain omega-3 fats. The egg yolk and egg white contain different nutrients.

Egg yolks are very high in cholesterol. In some people, this may increase blood cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. One large egg yolk contains about 215 milligrams of cholesterol or 71% of your entire daily allowance. Try to limit egg yolks to no more than one per day. If you have high cholesterol, heart disease, or diabetes limit them even more.

Egg whites are an excellent source of protein. They contain no cholesterol or saturated fat. In cooking, you can usually substitute two egg whites for one whole egg. Egg substitutes are usually made of pasteurized egg whites and contain no cholesterol.

By: Kelly Frazier, M.A., ACSM, Furman University. Sources: American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic, Harvard School of Public Health, and Food and Drug Administration.
Navigating the Supermarket (continued)

Milk and Soy milk: How do they compare?
Before you shop for your next carton of milk, see how it compares. Notice that all varieties of milk and soy milk contain about the same amount of protein and calcium. However, they vary considerably in calories, fat, and saturated fat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size= 1 cup</th>
<th>Whole Milk 3.3% Fat</th>
<th>Reduced-fat Milk 2.2% Fat</th>
<th>Low-Fat Milk 1% Fat</th>
<th>Non-fat Milk 0% Fat</th>
<th>Soy milk, Plain, Fortified</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fat (g)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturated fat (g)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cholesterol (g)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein (g)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium (mg)</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can I make healthier dairy and egg choices?

Choose light! Read labels and choose varieties that are lower in fat and saturated fat. This applies to all dairy products, not just milk.

Use less! Use strongly flavored cheese and use less. Try finely shredded cheese and deli-thin slices in order to cut back on portions.

Top with yogurt! The tangy taste of plain nonfat yogurt makes a great substitute for a dollop of sour cream. Yogurt also provides more nutrients like calcium and vitamin D.

Lighten your eggs! When baking, substitute 2 egg whites for 1 large egg. Use no more than one egg yolk per person when making egg dishes, such as omelets and frittatas.