

INCREASING CALCIUM INTAKE THROUGH DAIRY PRODUCTS MAY PREVENT ACCUMULATION OF BODY FAT IN YOUNG WOMEN

This 6-month follow-up study of the effect of a one-year dairy product intervention on fat mass in young women (ages 18 to 30 years) was supported by the National Dairy Council®. Previously, researchers from Purdue University randomly assigned 154 normal weight young women to one of three calcium intake groups: control (<800 mg/day); medium dairy (1,000 to 1,100 mg/day); or high dairy (1,300 to 1,400 mg/day) for a one-year trial. Results showed that this intervention did not increase or decrease body weight or fat mass (see April 15, 2005 CA). In the current study, 51 of the original participants who were willing to participate in a follow-up study were assessed 6 months after completion of the original intervention trial. Results showed the high-dairy group maintained a high calcium intake (an average of 1,027 mg/day) at 18 months when compared with the control group. The average calcium intake over the 18 months was associated with reduced fat mass when the researchers controlled for participant's initial group assignment and BMI at baseline. Furthermore, when the volunteers were subdivided by average calcium intake (either > 800 mg/d or < 800 mg/d), the > 800 mg/d group had significantly lower fat mass compared to the < 800 mg/d group at 18 months. Results demonstrate that increasing dairy product intake through an intervention study promotes increased calcium intakes 6 months after the end of the study period. Additionally, increased calcium intake (> 800 mg/d) leads to a decreased fat mass compared to a low calcium intake (< 800 mg/d) at 18 months. "Although the effect is small," say the authors, "18-month maintenance of higher dairy calcium intakes may lead to prevention of slow age-related fat mass gain." [Eagon MS, et al., Effect of 1-year dairy product intervention on fat mass in young women: 6-month follow-up, *Obesity*, 14(12): 2242-2248, 2006]