

# What, Is Milk Suddenly Bad for You?!



**What you've heard: Milk makes you break out.**

**What you should know:** In 2010, influential research in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found an association between **dairy consumption and acne**. Now the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) suggests that sufferers talk to their dermatologist about **limiting dairy** (especially skim milk, which seems to have the strongest effect) to see if that helps.

**So...if you're prone to pimples or eczema, drinking milk may exacerbate flare-ups.**

**What you've heard: Milk causes gas.**

**What you should know:** If you're racing for the restroom after eating an ice cream cone, you know you're lactose intolerant. But symptoms can be more subtle than people realize, says Robynne Chutkan, MD, author of *Gutbliss*. If you're mildly intolerant, you might not make the connection between your dairy treat and the bloating, mild cramping or gas you experience a few hours later. Research also shows that [our bodies get worse at processing lactose, the natural milk sugar, as we age](#) and that [some people are more prone to the condition](#): 90 percent of Asians, 70 percent of blacks and Native Americans, and 50 percent of Hispanics are lactose intolerant, compared with only about 15 percent of people of Northern European descent.

**So...**milk bothers some people, but it's not like only cute little baby calves should drink it.

**What you've heard: Milk doesn't protect your bones after all.**

**What you should know:** From infancy to old age, we need calcium to keep our bones strong, to build new bones and to prevent osteoporosis. [Dairy products have the highest concentration per serving of highly absorbable calcium](#). Milk is also fortified with vitamin D, which plays a crucial role in maintaining bone health—possibly an even bigger one than calcium, researchers believe. Here's where things get murky. Some studies have suggested that *too much* calcium (especially without vitamin D) might *increase* the risk of hip fractures, and other studies have shown that [calcium alone isn't enough to protect against fractures](#). There's a raging debate about the [calcium sweet spot](#); some of the country's most respected nutritionists claim that the current U.S. recommendations (1,000–1,200 milligrams per day, or two to three glasses of milk) are too high.

**So...**if you're drinking milk for your bones, experts say [a glass per day](#) (in addition to a

diet that provides around 300 milligrams of daily calcium) should be enough.

### **What you've heard: Milk makes you fat.**

**What you should know:** Milk is high in saturated fat ([5 grams in one cup](#)), yet switching to skim won't make you lose weight -- and may do just the opposite. Children who drank skim or 1 percent milk [gained more weight](#) than those who drank 2 percent or full-fat milk, found researchers at the University of Virginia. A large Swedish study also discovered a link between fattier milk and a lower risk of weight gain in adult women (normal-weight women who drank one or more cups a day of whole milk had a significantly lower chance of gaining weight than those who drank reduced-fat milk). The theory is that fattier milk increases satiety, decreasing your chances of eating something starchy and sugary later on.

**So...**For your weight's sake, better milk than cookies.

### **What you've heard: You *have* to drink milk, even if it's causing problems with your GI tract or your skin or you just never really cared for it.**

**What you should do:** There's no evidence that your health will suffer if you stop drinking it—as long as you're getting enough calcium and vitamin D from other food sources ([here's a handy list](#), which you can check with [this comprehensive database](#) that allows you to search by nutrient). Keep in mind that it's easier to work milk into a diet than, say, cod liver oil, so you'll have to get creative. Chutkan says it may take a while to notice any real difference, and that's why she suggests waiting until around six milk-free weeks to draw any conclusions.