Why Full-Fat Dairy Foods Might Be the Healthier Choice

April 7, 2016

If you think drinking skim milk instead of whole milk is better for your health, you may want to reconsider. A new study published in the journal Circulation shows that people who consume full-fat dairy actually weigh less and are less likely to develop diabetes than those who opt for the low-fat alternative, WXPI reports.

For the study, researchers checked the blood of almost 3,500 adults for almost 15 years. Findings showed that people with higher levels of three by-products found only in full-fat dairy enjoyed, on average, a 46 percent lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes. (In type 2 diabetes, the body becomes intolerant to insulin, the hormone that controls blood sugar levels in the body.)

Previously, health experts advised folks to avoid full-fat dairy products because they believed these more high-calorie foods would lead them to develop diabetes. But since then, behavioral studies showed that people who ate low-fat foods often ended up eating other products that contained more sugar and carbohydrates, upping their risk of getting diabetes.

Now, many researchers believe the whole fats in full-fat dairy foods can help regulate insulin and glucose in the blood. In addition, full-fat dairy foods may also help prevent folks from getting hungry for longer periods of time, ultimately cutting their overall caloric intake.

“This is just one more piece of evidence showing that we really need to stop making recommendations about food based on theories about one nutrient in food,” said Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, codirector of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and one of the study’s researchers. “It’s crucial at this time to understand that it’s about food as a whole and not single nutrients.”

Scientists stressed that more research is needed about how whole fats may help break down sugar in foods. Additionally, researchers are studying how certain enzymes in full-fat dairy foods, such as cheese, can improve insulin response.

Click here to read more about why switching out common high-calorie foods for their low-calorie diet replacements may actually lead to weight gain and higher disease risk as well.

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