

The Hallelujah Health Tip
Issue #206: Cow's Milk and the Dairy Industry
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HEALTH TIP: COW'S MILK AND THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

For the past several weeks I have been reviewing and sharing portions from John Robbins' new book "THE FOOD REVOLUTION." This week I am going to continue this review because the book deals with so many areas that people are confused about regarding diet. (All previous Health Tips are available at <http://www.hacres.com/healthtips.asp>.)

This week I would like to pick up where we left off last week, and go on to share some things John Robbins has to say in chapter 6, which deals with cow's milk and the dairy industry. Following are a few comments that John Robbins makes regarding this subject: "People often ask me questions that relate to dairy products: Don't we need them to get enough calcium? Isn't it important and necessary to drink milk?"

"You'd sure think so if you believed the ubiquitous 'milk mustache' ads that have been appearing just about everywhere in recent years. But there are a few problems with those ads.

"Many African American celebrities have been portrayed in the milk mustache ads promoting milk to cut the risk of osteoporosis. . . . These celebrities have a great deal of influence and no doubt believe that by appearing in these ads they are doing a public service. What they don't know is that there is no evidence, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), that increased calcium intake from milk will lower the risk of osteoporosis for African Americans.

"Similarly, many male celebrities . . . have appeared in the milk mustache ads promoting milk for osteoporosis. Here again, though, we have a problem. The FDA has found no evidence that increased calcium intake from milk lowers the risk of osteoporosis for males.

"Perhaps you've seen talk show host Larry King portrayed in milk mustache ads promoting milk to lower the risk of high blood pressure. What the ads didn't tell you was that the FDA has found no evidence that increased milk intake lowers the risk of high blood pressure.

"How about women? Dozens of milk mustache ads tell us that the calcium in milk helps women have stronger bones and avoid osteoporosis. But not according to the 12-year Nurses' Health Study, involving 78,000 women, which found no evidence at all that higher intakes of milk reduced osteoporosis or bone fracture incidence. In fact, the study found that the relative risk of hip fracture for women who drink two glasses or more of milk per day was 1.45 times higher than for those who drink one glass or less per week. . . .

"In 2000, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) had had enough and filed a petition with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requesting an immediate investigation into the health claims of the milk mustache ads. PCRM asked the FTC to investigate whether the National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board and the Milk Industry Foundation had been disseminating scientifically unsubstantiated, purposefully deceptive, and harmful advertising.

"The president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, Neal Barnard, M.D., spoke strongly about the dairy ads. 'The dairy industry continues to whitewash the dangers of cow's milk,' he said. 'The ubiquitous "milk mustache" campaign makes misleading claims about milk preventing osteoporosis, lowering blood pressure, and enhancing sports performance. Recent studies, including the Harvard Nurses' Health Study, have shown that milk offers no protection against broken bones. And, unlike prescription drug ads, the mustache ads don't reveal the many unwanted "side-effects" of milk, among them increased risk of prostate and ovarian cancer, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

THE CALCIUM CONSPIRACY

"For years, the dairy industry barraged us with ads telling us that milk is Nature's perfect food. Of course, the ads usually didn't mention that milk is Nature's perfect food for turning a 90-pound calf into a 450-pound cow in one year.

"Now we have the Dairy Bureau stating, 'It's irresponsible to suggest some physicians recommend against using milk.' But in fact many physicians--including well-known authors Frank Oski, M.D. (former Director, Department of Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Physician-in-Chief, John Hopkins Children's Center), Benjamin Spock, M.D., Neal Barnard, M.D., John McDougall, M.D. Michael Klaper, M.D. . . and many others—have publicly and emphatically recommended against consuming dairy products. . . ."

From the Dairy Bureau of Canada: "A low calcium intake in the children of vegans is a cause for major concern."

But from Health Canada's Nutrition Recommendations: "Beyond weaning age, children and adults of various countries and food cultures subsist on diets differing markedly in their calcium content. These differences in calcium intake . . . have not been demonstrated to have any consequences for nutritional health. . . ."

"I continue to be amazed at how often dairy industry ads are off the mark. You've probably seen their ads telling us that consumption of dairy products will build stronger bones in the elderly. But in 1994, the American Journal of Epidemiology published a study of elderly women and men that found something quite different. Elderly people with the highest dairy product consumption actually had double the risk of hip fractures compared to those with the lowest consumption.."

"The scientists who conducted the study knew why drinking milk was linked with increased calcium loss. Many studies have shown that the more animal protein we eat, the more calcium we lose.

"The calcium-losing effect of animal protein on the human body is not a matter of controversy in scientific circles. Researchers who conducted a recent survey of diet and hip fractures in 33 countries said they found 'an absolutely phenomenal correlation' between the ratio of plant to animal foods. The more plant foods people eat (particularly fruits and vegetables), the stronger their bones, and the fewer fractures they experience. The more animal foods people eat, on the other hand, the weaker their bones and the more fractures they experience. . . ."

WHAT WE KNOW

* Countries with the highest consumption of dairy products: Finland, Sweden, United States, England

* Countries with the highest rates of osteoporosis: Finland, Sweden, United States, England

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* Daily calcium intake for African Americans: More than 1,000 mg

* Daily calcium intake for black South Africans: 196 mg.

* Hip fracture rate for African Americans compared to black South Africans: 9 times greater

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* Calcium intake in rural China: One-half that of people in the United States

* Bone fracture rate in rural China: One-fifth that of people in the United States

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* Foods that when eaten produce calcium loss through urinary excretion: Animal protein, salt, and coffee

* Amount of calcium lost in the urine of a woman after eating a hamburger: 28 milligrams

* Amount of calcium lost in the urine of a woman after drinking a cup of coffee: 2 milligrams

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" . . . And this brings me, at last, to why I criticize the dairy industry. My criticism is not with the people who eat ice cream cones, or a bowl of yogurt, or enjoy some cheese. My criticism is with the dairy industry for

putting out ads that are deceptive and untrue, and that trick people, and do so quite intentionally, into believing that dairy products are necessary for a healthy diet. I don't like to see people misled for commercial purposes. I don't like to see commercials that imply that without dairy products, your bones will surely break. That just isn't true, as the people in most Asian countries can tell you. They have until very recently consumed little or no dairy products, and yet have had a much lower incidence of osteoporosis than people in the United States. The reason their bones are so much stronger than are Americans' are several, including that they eat more vegetables, get a lot of physical exercise, and don't drink nearly the quantity of cola drinks we do. But a major reason is also that they eat much less animal protein than Americans do, including hardly any dairy products, and their bones are far healthier for it."

Next week I plan on continuing this review of John Robbins' new book "THE FOOD REVOLUTION." But in the meantime, I suggest that you get your own copy of the book because all I am hitting in this review are a few brief quotes. (The book contains 450 pages, and thus far we have only briefly skimmed and reviewed the first 112 pages.)

There are very few books I consider a MUST READ, but this is one of them. I highly recommend this new book to all subscribers (especially Health Ministers) and those who are interested in documentation supporting a plant-based diet. This book also provides tremendous ammunition to use in encouraging or debating others. For more information on "THE FOOD REVOLUTION," or for information on how to purchase it, call (704) 481-1700 or visit our Web catalog at <<http://www3.mailordercentral.com/hacres>>.