

The Best Milk?

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The best choice for milk is an ongoing controversy with opinions from every side. Is it organic cow, soy, rice or nut milk? Dairy intolerance and demand for convenience have fueled a search for substitutes.

What has been learned in our evolving relationship with food is that the more we process it, the more the food is stripped of its nutritional value and the inherent health benefits that nature had there for us all along. This also holds true for milk.

In the beginning was the breast, nature's intention for babies to suckle at the breast of their healthy mothers. Breast milk is perfectly designed for the mental and physical development of a child. It is high in quality fat, loaded with necessary nutrients, probiotics and enzymes that enhance digestibility and provide immune protection.

Organic raw milk, be it from a cow or goat, is as close as we can get to those health benefits. Raw milk would be an ideal choice as it is alive with the very enzymes and probiotics needed to easily and properly digest the milk while supporting healthy flora in the intestinal tract. In pasteurizing milk, we kill off the very aliveness of milk that benefits the body. Contrary to milk lore, when basic sanitation measures followed, raw milk is completely safe. More and more families are returning its consumption and in doing so many find that their digestive distress and allergies subside.

If the choice available is commercial milk, it is best to choose whole cow or goat milk, preferably organic. Organic cows and goats are more likely to have been grass-fed with the minimal use of hormones and anti-biotics in their raising; the quality of milk therefore more wholesome. Full fat milk is best because of its concentrated source of calories. Fat increases satiety (contentment) and is necessary for absorption of calcium as well as for proper brain and nerve development. To restore enzymes, it may be cultured with a kefir culture.

Due to the rise in dairy allergies and lactose intolerance (a result of the lack of enzymes in pasteurized milk), soy milk is often considered an alternative. Soy milk, however, comes with host of health concerns. A 1990 FDA warning states that soy milk should not be used for infants for it 'grossly lacks in the nutrients needed'. Soy also contains phytic acid which inhibits absorption of minerals, protease inhibitors which block digestion of protein and has high levels of toxins such as aluminum. Elevated levels of phytoestrogens and isoflavones in soy have been found to depress thyroid function and wreak havoc on the hormonal system; certainly not something for infants, toddlers, growing children or adults for that matter. Moderation in its use would certainly be key.

Two safer alternatives are almond and rice milk. Almond milk would be the more advantageous with its higher protein and fat content. Rice milk is largely a source of carbohydrate. With both, one must read the labels carefully. Although not needed, sugar, synthetic ingredients and flavoring are often added. If eliminating dairy milk from the diet, be sure that good sources of complete protein and quality fats are added to the diet.

The golden rule of any food: stay as close as you can to the bounty of Mother Nature.

References:

Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon

Weston A Price Organization – www.westonaprice.org

Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD – author of *The Whole Soy Story: The Dark Side of America's Favorite Health Food*

Almond Milk

- 1) Soak almonds in filtered cold water overnight. (Organic, raw and with skins is ok)
- 2) In a.m., drain the water.
- 3) In proportion of 1 c. almonds to 3 c. filtered water, place combo into blender and blend 30sec to 1 minute.
- 4) Pour through strainer.
- 5) Only lasts 1-2 days in the refrigerator, so make smaller portions more often rather than having it sit too long.
- 6) You may add vanilla if you like.