

Spotlight

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on nutrition issues

What's Inside

What's New?

Portable Milk p. 4

Did you know? p. 6, 7

Author

Brianne McVeigh, MSc, RD, is a nutrition educator at Dairy Farmers of Canada, where she develops nutrition and health resources and delivers workshops to educators. Brianne holds a Master of Science degree in Human Biology and Nutritional Sciences from the University of Guelph. She has particular interests in education for adults and in online learning.

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Developed by the team of Registered Dietitians at Dairy Farmers of Canada



Milk and Health: Answers to Your Most Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Over the years, the Registered Dietitians at Dairy Farmers of Canada have received many great questions from our readers regarding milk products and health. This issue of *Spotlight* answers your most frequently asked questions, pulling together relevant research and providing you with the latest information on issues key to your practice and clients. The answers to many of these questions have been established for some time and therefore have not been the focus of recent research efforts.

Organic Milk

Q: In my practice, I get a lot of questions about organic milk. Is it healthier than conventional milk?

A: There is no evidence that organic milk is healthier or safer than non-organic milk. All milk must comply with the same food safety regulations. Both regular and organic milk are healthy choices; they both contain many essential nutrients and are free of antibiotics and artificial growth hormones.

Background

All milk must meet the same rigid quality standards at each step from the farm to consumers. Nutritionally, organic and conventional milk are the same. They both contain the same amount of nutrients, including calcium and vitamin D. In addition, both

organic and conventional milk are free of artificial growth hormones and antibiotics. There is inadequate research to indicate that one choice is “healthier” than the other.¹⁻³

Organic milk is produced by cows that are fed organically grown feed. This means that the feed must be grown without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. There are third-party certification bodies that determine the definition of “organic.” In addition to only receiving organic feed, cows producing organic milk cannot be given antibiotics. The main difference between organic and non-organic milk is the cost – organic milk is often more expensive.

Often people choose organic milk because they wish to support organic farming practices. It is, ultimately, a personal choice; both types of milk are natural, safe and wholesome.