Low-Fat Dairy Products Linked to Increased Infertility Risk

A new study found low-fat dairy product consumption is linked to an increased risk of infertility. A total of 18,555 premenopausal women from the Nurses' Health Study II who attempted a pregnancy or became pregnant between 1991 and 1999 were evaluated for the association between dairy products and infertility. Women who consumed two or more servings per day of low-fat dairy products had 1.85 times the risk for infertility. While total dairy product intake was not associated with an increased risk of infertility, the majority of fat in dairy products is saturated fat, which is linked to increased cholesterol, insulin resistance, overweight and obesity, and other health problems.


Meat-Eating Moms Have Less-Fertile Sons

A new study in *Human Reproduction* finds that a pregnant woman's meat consumption can reduce her future son's sperm count. Researchers at the University of Rochester in New York analyzed the relationship between various sperm parameters of 387 men and the eating habits of their mothers from the Study for Future Families. The more beef a mother consumed, the lower her son's sperm concentration. Sperm count was 24 percent higher in men whose mothers consumed less beef. The difference may be due to steroid hormones found in animal products. Six hormones are commonly used in the United States to induce increased growth and development in cows, and measurable levels are routinely present in the animals' muscle, fat, liver, kidneys, and other organs. Cattle raised without extra hormones still have significant hormone levels in their tissues because of endogenous hormone production, and the nutrient profile of animal products tends to elevate hormone levels in the human body.


High Calcium and Vitamin D Intake May Lead to Cognitive Impairment

Duke University researchers recently found an association between a high dietary intake of calcium and vitamin D and brain lesion volume in elderly men and women. Researchers believe that the problem may be due to the effects of calcification and bone-like formations in blood vessels. Vitamin D enhances calcium absorption and may accelerate this process.

Investigator Martha Payne designed this study after finding a similar association between high-fat dairy products and brain lesions. Current dietary calcium and Vitamin D recommendations for adults over 50 years of age are 1,200 mg and 400 to 600 I.U., respectively. The findings suggest that these recommendations may be too high for portions of the general population. Calcium recommendations are set high in Western countries to compensate for the bone loss resulting from diets high in animal protein, sodium, and other calcium wasters. The World Health Organization acknowledges that less dietary calcium is needed when animal protein consumption is low.


Dairy Products Linked to Parkinson's Disease

A new study from the *American Journal of Epidemiology* links the consumption of dairy products to an increased risk for Parkinson's disease. Researchers studied this association among 388 men and women with Parkinson's disease participating in the American Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Study II. Those who consumed the most dairy milk had a 70 percent greater risk for the disease.
