YOGURT'S ROLE IN A FLEXITARIAN DIET

A flexitarian diet contains both plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds) and animal-based products (low fat or nonfat dairy, lean meats, poultry, seafood, and eggs) in a balanced approach. Switching to a flexitarian diet may help one manage certain health concerns and provide sustainable dietary options.[1]

1 YOGURT SCORES HIGH AS A NUTRIENT-DENSE SNACK

- A recent study compared popular snack foods by their overall nutrient profiles. The study utilized a nutrient-density measurement tool known as the Nutrient Rich Foods (NRF) Index 10.3. Yogurt was found to have the highest nutrient-density score, but was the least consumed among the snack foods evaluated.[2]
- Lowfat and nonfat yogurts are good choices to help achieve daily nutrient requirements and can be an important source of high-quality protein and calcium as well as phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, iodine, zinc, and vitamins, such as vitamins A, D, B12, and riboflavin (B2).[3]

2 YOGURT CAN BE AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF COMPLETE PROTEIN

- Dairy products, such as nonfat and lowfat yogurt, are well established as providing a source of complete protein.[4]
- The dairy protein found in yogurt is well digested and absorbed, and its mix of amino acids, including all nine essential amino acids, supports efficient protein synthesis.[5]

3 THE NUTRIENTS IN YOGURT SUPPORT MUSCLE AND BONE HEALTH[6]

- Calcium, vitamin D, and protein together help promote muscle and bone health.
- Calcium plays a major role in bone health and muscle contractility and vitamin D is required for calcium to be properly absorbed by the body.[7,8]

4 YOGURT AS PART OF A HEALTHY DIETARY PATTERN MAY PLAY A ROLE IN WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

- An epidemiological study compared consumption of different foods, including yogurt, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains among more than 120,000 U.S. women and men and showed that consumption of these foods was associated with less weight gain over time, with yogurt showing the best results.[9]
- Other forms of dairy, including low fat or nonfat milk, had no measurable association with less weight gain.

5 CONSUMING YOGURT AS PART OF A BALANCED DIET MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH HEART HEALTH[10]

- In a recent observational study, yogurt consumption was associated with healthy levels of systolic blood pressure and circulating glucose within the normal range.[10]
- Consuming yogurt as part of a balanced diet may help maintain metabolic well-being.

6 YOGURT MAY BE AN OPTION FOR LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

- Yogurt is, for many consumers, a more easily digestible alternative to milk because, on average, it contains less lactose than milk.[11]
- Also, yogurt's live and active cultures continue to have activity in the intestinal tract and may allow lactose intolerant individuals to enjoy the nutritional benefits of dairy products with fewer associated symptoms.[12]

7 YOGURT CAN CONTAIN LIVE AND ACTIVE CULTURES

- Fermented foods like yogurt that contain live bacteria, probiotics, or prebiotics can help nourish, enrich and protect the gut microbiota, which plays a central role in our overall health.
- Cultures and fermentation can increase the nutrient content (e.g., B-vitamins) and digestibility of foods.[13]

8 GREEK YOGURT IS TYPICALLY HIGHER IN PROTEIN AND LOWER IN SUGAR[14]

- The straining process used to make Greek yogurt removes some of the lactose and leaves more of the milk solids, which results in a denser product with a higher protein level and lower carbohydrates than that of regular yogurt.
- High-quality proteins, like dairy protein, can help support weight management and promote satiety.[15]

9 INCLUDING YOGURT IN A CHILD'S DIET MAY HELP IMPROVE DIET QUALITY

- Including nutrient-dense yogurt in a child's diet may help improve diet quality and prevent excess weight gain. A recent analysis of national health and nutrition data found that introducing one 6-oz. serving of vitamin D-fortified yogurt each day to children's snack times would help children increase dietary intake of calcium, vitamin D, and potassium without adding empty calories.[16]
- Combining yogurt with fruit or vegetables (e.g., as a dip or smoothie) can also increase consumption of other nutrient dense foods and dietary fiber intake.[17]
- A study recently found that higher yogurt consumption was associated with lower measures of adiposity in U.S. children (ages 8–18), such as lower BMI-for-age, lower waist circumference, and smaller subscapular skinfold.[18]

10 DAIRY HAS A LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT THAN OTHER ANIMAL-BASED PROTEINS, SUCH AS BEEF AND PORK[19]

- Nonfat and low fat dairy, including yogurt, play a role in a flexitarian eating pattern. Not only is dairy a nutrient-rich food, it also has a lower carbon footprint than other animal-based proteins, such as beef and pork.[19]
- The high quality and highly digestible proteins in dairy products play a key role in nutrition, especially when reducing meat consumption.[5]

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