

# Drinking milk may help ease the pressure

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Women who drank more fat free milk and had higher intakes of calcium and vitamin D from foods, and not supplements, tended to have a lower risk for developing hypertension or high blood pressure, according to a new study published in the American Heart Association journal, *Hypertension*.

After examining the diets of nearly 30,000 middle-aged and older women, Harvard researchers found that women who consumed more low-fat milk and milk products and had diets higher in calcium and vitamin D from foods were better protected against high blood pressure.

When the researchers investigated the benefits of milk specifically, they found women who drank two or more servings of fat free milk each day reduced their risk for high blood pressure by up to 10 percent compared to those who drank fat free milk less than once a month. The same was not found for higher fat milk and milk products or calcium and vitamin D supplement users.

One in three American adults has high blood pressure, and an increasing number of women are living with undiagnosed hypertension, according to a second study published in the journal *Circulation*. The last decade has seen significant increases in uncontrolled high blood pressure for women across the nation, a condition that puts them at serious risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and even kidney failure.

Yet despite a vast body of research linking diet changes to blood pressure control, most Americans are still missing the mark on their

diets. According to new research published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, Americans are ignoring the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) Diet, the therapeutic eating plan recommended by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute that emphasizes low-fat dairy, fruits and vegetables to help reduce blood pressure levels.

Previous research has linked the DASH diet and lowfat or fat free milk to blood pressure benefits – one reason why the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend drinking three glasses of lowfat or fat free milk each day. Milk provides nine essential nutrients, including calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, protein and potassium.

Source: Weber Shandwick Worldwide

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