

Mediterranean diet with extra dairy could be a gut gamechanger

September 14 2023



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A collaboration between SAHMRI, UniSA and Flinders University researchers has shown the classic Mediterranean diet with added dairy has the potential to change the composition of gut bacteria for the better, triggering a variety of health benefits.

Published in [Nutrients](#), the study assessed how the classic Mediterranean diet, supplemented with milk, cheese and yogurt, can affect gut microbiome.

Adult trial participants at risk of heart disease who followed the diet for an eight-week period showed a sizeable increase in [beneficial microbes](#) associated with positive effects on overall gut health, alongside a simultaneous decrease in bad bacteria linked to heart disease risk.

Lead researcher, UniSA's Dr. Karen Murphy says that [gut microbiota](#) plays an important role in multiple aspects of health.

"The Mediterranean diet has key foods and nutrients such as fiber, healthy fats, vitamins and [amino acids](#) all of which can help improve the gut environment," Dr. Murphy says.

"This research demonstrates that a Mediterranean diet, supplemented with additional dairy foods to meet Australian calcium guidelines, can help promote a healthy gut."

SAHMRI and Flinders University Senior Research Scientist, Dr. Jocelyn Choo, who led the microbiome analysis, says the findings support a correlation between the balance of microbiome, intestinal health and cardiometabolic health.

"While the overall structure of the [gut microbiome](#) didn't change dramatically, the study demonstrated that changes in the amount of certain bacteria was clearly linked to the diet," Dr. Choo says.

"We found that as participants increased the number of good microbes in their gut, they also presented with lower blood pressure. These improvements are significant, given the potential implications for reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke."

This study supports current evidence linking a Mediterranean diet to a boost in metabolism and highlights that [positive changes](#) in gut microbes spurred by this style of diet when enriched with [dairy products](#), could be responsible for further cardiometabolic health improvements.

More information: Jocelyn M. Choo et al, Interactions between Mediterranean Diet Supplemented with Dairy Foods and the Gut Microbiota Influence Cardiovascular Health in an Australian Population, *Nutrients* (2023). [DOI: 10.3390/nu15163645](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15163645)

Provided by University of South Australia

Citation: Mediterranean diet with extra dairy could be a gut gamechanger (2023, September 14) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-09-mediterranean-diet-extra-dairy-gut.html>

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