

PRESS RELEASE

Regular yogurt consumption may help prevent cardiometabolic diseases

Growing evidence for the benefits of yogurt consumption in preventing type 2 diabetes and other cardiometabolic risk factors

The importance of dairy as part of a balanced and healthy diet is widely recognised by health authorities and scientific experts worldwide. Now, evidence is mounting that consuming yogurt in particular as part of a healthy diet helps to prevent type 2 diabetes and other cardiometabolic risk factors, with one of the most recent studies suggesting that people who regularly eat yogurt are almost 30% less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who do not.¹ Speaking to public health officials at the III World Congress of Public Health Nutrition in Spain, Dr André Marette from the Heart and Lung Institute of Laval Hospital in Quebec, Canada, said it was time to recognize the all-round health benefits of yogurt and encourage more people to eat yogurt on a daily basis.

“Recent epidemiological studies have shown that yogurt consumption is associated with a better quality diet and metabolic profile and negatively associated with long-term weight gain,” he said. “New information has now emerged that fermented milk and yogurt consumption have the potential to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.” Yogurt contains indeed important nutrients and specific peptides that may have positive effects on glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity, thereby reducing cardiometabolic risk.”

Evidence for the prevention of type 2 diabetes

Individual studies and meta-analyses have evaluated the association between yogurt consumption and a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. The most recent systematic review of the literature – which included 7 cohort studies– found a non-linear relationship between yogurt consumption and risk of type 2 diabetes in people consuming up to 120 g/day of yogurt.² No additional risk reduction was observed with an intake >120–140 g/day.

In a large epidemiological study, researchers at Cambridge University monitored the health of more than 4000 people over 11 years through the European Prospective Investigation into

Cancer (EPIC) Norfolk cohort. Assessing food intake using comprehensive 7-day food diaries at study baseline, together with repeated health examinations, revealed that those who regularly ate low-fat fermented dairy products (i.e. products with <4% fat content such as yogurt – which accounted for 87% of all low-fat products consumed in this study – cheese and sour cream) were 24% less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who did not. And when researchers examined consumers of yogurt specifically, they found that people who ate approximately 4.5 standard pots of yogurt (80 g/day) each week benefitted from a 28% reduced relative risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to non consumers. “This study confirmed that yogurt was the most potent of all the dairy products studied in terms of diabetes risk reduction,” explained Dr. Marette. “Importantly, the association between yogurt consumption and a reduced risk of diabetes remained even after adjusting for potential confounding factors.”

Incorporating yogurt into daily life

While evidence from epidemiological studies for the benefits of yogurt in reducing cardiometabolic risk is now compelling, these studies have been performed in different countries using diverse methodologies.² This makes it hard to draw firm conclusions on the amount of yogurt that should be consumed in order to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. Most national dietary guidelines recommend two to three servings of dairy products each day – with yogurt to be consumed alongside other dairy products as part of a healthy diet.

“When choosing a yogurt, look for low energy-dense but high nutrient-dense products,” suggested Dr. Marette. “There is also some evidence that yogurts with probiotics have the potential to act on the gut microbiota, which can impact obesity-related diseases. Those made from milk fortified with vitamin D could potentiate the effect of yogurt on type 2 diabetes and health in general.”

Dr. Marette urged researchers to conduct more prospective studies investigating the effects of yogurt on cardiometabolic risk factors and to initiate clinical trials and experimental studies to demonstrate the causal effect of yogurt on the prevention of type 2 diabetes and the mechanisms underlying these beneficial effects. Such studies are needed to strengthen the evidence that yogurt, as part of a healthy, balanced diet, can help prevent type 2 diabetes and associated cardiometabolic disorders.

References

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2. Aune D, Norat T, Romundstad P, et al. Dairy products and the risk of type 2 diabetes: a systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of cohort studies. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2013;98(4):1066-83.

About the Yogurt in Nutrition Initiative (YINI)

The Yogurt in Nutrition Initiative for a Balanced Diet is a multi-year global, collaborative project led by the Danone Institute International (DII) in collaboration with the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) and the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) which aims to evaluate the current evidence base on the nutritional impact of yogurt. The mission of the project is to uncover scientific data related to yogurt, stimulate new research and identify gaps in our understanding of the health effects of this food category in order to share this information with professionals and the public. <http://yogurtinnutrition.com>; Twitter: [@YogurtNutrition](https://twitter.com/YogurtNutrition)

Press contact:

impressum health & science communication
Frank von Spee
Email: vonspee@impressum.de
Tel: +49 (0)40 – 31 78 64 10
Fax: +49 (0)40 – 31 78 64 64