

## **Good news for women: Dairy food not linked to tummy fat**

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A new study has found women who eat more dairy foods, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt, do not gain weight.

Higher consumption of dairy foods containing calcium is important to prevent osteoporosis, especially in older women.

“People are worried about adding dairy to their diet - they worry about the fat content and they think they are going to put on weight,” says Dr Devika Thomas, who is presenting the research at the ASMR SA conference. “But we found that high dairy in women’s diets did not increase their abdominal fat content.”

In osteoporosis, low dietary intakes of calcium lead to bone loss and fractures. One in three women over the age of 50 experiences a fracture due to osteoporosis.

The study recorded the diets of women aged 50 to 75 years old and directly measured their tummy fat using a technique called dual energy X-ray absorptiometry. The women who ate more dairy had higher calorie intakes, but the researchers found this was unrelated to abdominal fat, waist circumference or body mass index (BMI).

“This is good news for older women, who may be able to get the calcium they need in their diet and maintain optimal weight,” says Dr Thomas, a pathologist and researcher at the University of Adelaide. More research is necessary to find the mechanism behind this, but it may be due to the role of calcium in regulating fat storage.

In Australia, 2.2 million individuals were diagnosed with osteoporosis in 2007, and this number is likely to increase to 3 million by 2021.

## **Forget popping fish oil tablets – New omega-3 eggs**

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Scientists have created new eggs enriched in omega-3 fatty acids - found in fish oil capsules - without the unpleasant fishy taste.

Fish oil capsules are a very popular nutritional supplement, because they contain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids that can protect against heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Previous attempts to introduce fish oil into foods resulted in a ‘fishy’ taste.

Now, the scientists have turned to alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a fatty acid found in vegetable oil that is also rich in omega-3s. The ALA was added to chicken feed, producing eggs with higher levels of ALA and the beneficial omega-3s found in fish oil capsules.

Taste-testers ate the eggs boiled and scrambled and found they tasted and smelt the same as supermarket eggs.

“Increasing the omega-3 content of eggs gives people an easy way to improve their omega-3 status and potentially their health,” says Lilik Kartikasari, who is presenting the findings at the ASMR SA conference.

“Even people who don’t like to eat fish can get the benefit of the fish-fats,” says Ms Kartikasari, a PhD candidate and researcher at the University of Adelaide. “Eggs currently contain only a small amount of omega-3 fats because the typical diet of chickens is high in omega-6 fats and low in omega-3 fats.”

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