Facts About Organic Milk

Organic or conventional milk are choices for the consumer at the dairy case. Stringent government standards for all milk production ensures that the US milk supply is safe, wholesome and nutritious. Organic milk has no scientifically proven health advantage over conventional milk and both products can be part of the three servings of dairy needed every day for good health.

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
Wisconsin Dairy Producers

Fast Facts

Organic Milk

Farm management practices for organic milk are strictly monitored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The use of "USDA Organic" labeling assures consumers that the product is produced, processed and certified to consistent standards. Cows on organic farms must be allowed access to pasture, but are not always grass fed. Organic farms face strict restrictions on the use of synthetic hormones, pesticides and antibiotics. Milk and other dairy products are among the most tested, monitored and safest products available in the grocery store.

All Milk is Free of Antibiotics

Consumers do not have to purchase organic milk to be assured that milk is antibiotic free. Every tanker of milk entering every dairy plant is tested for antibiotics. In the rare event that a tanker of milk tests positive for antibiotics, the product is not allowed in to the food supply. According to recent Food and Drug Administration (FDA) data, less than one tanker in 1,000 tests positive for any animal drug residue.

Organic Farm Practices Do Not Affect Milk Nutrient Composition

All types of milk are similar in composition. A 2008 study reported in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* compared the composition of milk labeled "organic", "rbST-free" and regular milk and found no detectable antibiotics in any product, no significant difference in bacterial count, no significant difference in nutrient content and no differences in concentration of bST.

Pesticides in Food

Pesticides are not a cause for health concerns in the US food supply, according to FDA and USDA testing which indicates that levels of pesticides in foods are far below the allowable limits. Detectable residues of pesticides in milk are among the lowest of all foods in the U.S. food supply and well within consumer protection standards.

Nutritional Quality

In 2010 the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported there is no significant difference in the nutrient content of organic foods when compared to conventional foods. Organic milk contains the same 9 essential nutrients as conventional milk. Milk supplies calcium, protein, carbohydrates, Vitamin A and D, phosphorus, potassium, Vitamin B12, riboflavin and niacin. Like conventional milk, organic milk is pasteurized.

Hormones and rBST

Non-organic dairy farmers may choose to supplement some cows with rbST to boost milk production and ensure a plentiful milk supply. All cows produce a natural protein hormone (bST) that helps them produce milk. Because bST is a protein, it is digested into amino acids and peptides that have no hormonal activity in humans. Organic milk is rbST free, but there is no health advantage to this claim, according to the FDA.

Make the Choice

Evaluate nutrition quality, flavor and price before choosing milk to enjoy with meals and snacks every day. Organic milk, cheese and yogurt are often more expensive to purchase and may taste slightly different. Some organic products are produced locally and help support local farmers. Review the label carefully before buying.

Choosing Three Servings Every Day

Whether the choice is organic or conventional, when it comes to dairy products, nutrient-rich milk, cheese and yogurt are easy to include in your every day diet. Choose reduced-fat, low-fat or fat-free, organic or flavored options to fit your nutrient needs.

Milk-- 8 ounces (1 cup)
Natural Cheese-- 1 1/2 ounces
Yogurt-- 8 ounces (1 cup)

Serve milk and flavored milk with meals, offer fruit and yogurt for breakfast and snack time, add cheese to sandwiches or salads at lunch and dinner. For more great ideas and recipes featuring Wisconsin cheese, milk and yogurt, visit **www.EatWisconsinCheese.com** and **www.NationalDairyCouncil.org/recipes**.

www.WisconsinDairyCouncil.com

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