

Ask Stacy – December 2011

Question:

Soy, almond, coconut, rice....!: I'm confused by all of the different varieties of milk substitutes on the market. Which one is the best?

Answer:

There are many non-dairy milk alternatives available for those who prefer not to drink cow's milk. In recent years more varieties of milk substitutes have become available. In 2010 sales of non-dairy milk products grew 13 percent. This is great for those looking for an alternative, but as the shelf gets more crowded, it can be difficult to choose which one is best for you.

Deciding the variety of non-dairy milk to choose depends on your goal. Are you trying to lose weight? If so, you may want to choose almond milk because it is lower in calories. If you are a vegetarian you may want to choose soymilk, because it is highest in protein. Are you prone to allergies? Then you may want to choose rice milk because it is non-allergenic. Hemp milk is a lesser-known milk alternative, but is a great choice for those looking for a source of omega-3 fats. One serving of hemp milk provides an entire day's worth of omega-3 fats. Oat milk, which is made with pre-soaked oat groats, is filled with vitamin A and calcium. New to the scene is coconut milk, which has recently risen in popularity with the latest research that coconut milk can aid in weight loss and prevent heart disease.

I've compared a dozen different varieties of milk substitutes to better understand differences in nutrients. This breakdown of the non-dairy milks' may help you decide which one is right for you:

Type of milk (8 fluid oz.)	Calories	Fat	Protein	Sugar
Nonfat Milk	90	0	9	12
8 th Continent Light Soy Milk (Plain)	50	2	6	2
Silk Light Soy Milk (Vanilla)	80	2	6	7
Silk Pure Almond Milk (Plain)	60	2.5	1	7
Silk Pure Almond Milk (Vanilla)	90	2.5	1	15
Blue Diamond Almond Milk (Vanilla Unsweetened)	40	3	1	0
Silk Light Almond Milk (Chocolate)	120	1.5	5	19
So Delicious Coconut Milk (Plain Unsweetened)	50	5	1	0
So Delicious Coconut Milk (Vanilla)	90	5	1	7
Living Harvest Hemp Milk	130	3	4	15
Rice Dream Vanilla Rice Milk	130	2.5	1	12
Pacific Organic Oat Milk	130	2.5	4	19

My personal favorite is almond milk because it is high in calcium, low in calories, high in vitamin E and tastes great. Silk Almond milk actually offers more calcium

than cow's milk, making it a great choice for growing kids who need calcium and vitamin D for bone development.

No matter which type of milk you choose, watch out for added sugar. Many brands, especially flavored varieties, add sugar and salt to improve the flavor. Notice that several brands listed on this chart have 19 grams of sugar in one serving. That is more than a tablespoon per cup. Look for a brand that has no more than 12 grams of sugar per serving, which is the amount of natural sugars in regular milk.

For more healthy eating tips, ideas or to purchase my brand new cookbook, ***Guilt-Free Cupcakes: Indulge without the bulge***, visit ***Five a Day the Fun Way*** at <http://fiveadaythefunway.com> to purchase. Email me at stacy@stacycacciatore.com if you have a question you'd like to see featured in a future column.

Healthfully,
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