

[close window](#)

Source: <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=176587>

Could Low-Fat Yogurt Help Ward Off Diabetes?



By **Steven Reinberg**

HealthDay Reporter

Latest Diabetes News

- [For a Sugar-Free Valentine's Day...](#)
- [Obesity's Link to Type 2 Diabetes Not So Clear-Cut](#)
- [Diabetes Drug Saxagliptin and Heart Failure Risk](#)
- [Premie Birth Linked to Higher Insulin Levels](#)
- [7 New Regions of DNA Tied to Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [Want More News? Sign Up for MedicineNet Newsletters!](#)

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 5, 2014 (HealthDay News) -- People looking to avoid [type 2 diabetes](#) might want to increase the amount of yogurt they eat, a new study by British researchers suggests.

According to the results, eating yogurt could reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 28 percent, compared to not eating any yogurt. Additionally, eating some other fermented dairy products, such as low-fat cheeses, could cut the risk by 24 percent.

"What our study shows is that yogurt should be part of a healthy diet," said lead researcher Dr. Nita Forouhi, group leader of the nutritional epidemiology program at the Medical Research Council at the [University of Cambridge](#).

Although this study did not directly address the nutrients in yogurt or low-fat fermented dairy products that are most beneficial, previous information suggests what they're likely to be, she said.

"These include calcium, magnesium, vitamin D (in fortified dairy products) and potentially beneficial fatty acids, which are present in dairy products generally," Forouhi said. "Fermented dairy products, including yogurt, are likely to have the further benefits of specific types of vitamin K and probiotic bacteria."

She cautioned that this study "does not prove a cause-and-effect relationship, but highlights the importance of considering food group subtypes in diet/disease associations. Much past research has focused on overall total dairy products intake, whereas our research was able to examine subtypes of dairy products."

The university-funded study was published Feb. 5 in the journal *Diabetologia*.

Samantha Heller, a senior clinical nutritionist at [NYU Langone Medical Center](#), in New York City, said the new

study "appears to echo what some studies, but not all, have found, which is that low-fat dairy foods may help reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes."

Emerging research suggests that gut microbes play important roles in the development of type 2 diabetes, inflammation and other diseases, she said.

"Scientists are also looking at the effects of fermented soybean products in preventing or in delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes," Heller said. "Fermented foods contain probiotic bacteria that are good for the gastrointestinal tract. Fermented foods include yogurt and cottage cheese with live, active cultures, miso, kimchi, kefir [a yogurt-based drink], sauerkraut and tempeh."

For the study, Forouhi and colleagues collected data on 4,255 men and women who were part of a larger British study. This group included 753 people who developed type 2 diabetes over 11 years of follow-up and 3,502 randomly selected people for comparison.

Looking at these people's diets, the researchers found that the amount of high-fat dairy or total low-fat dairy was not linked to the risk of developing diabetes -- once factors like healthy lifestyles, education, [obesity](#), other eating habits and total calorie intake were taken into account.

Milk and cheese consumption was also not associated with the risk of developing diabetes.

But what was significant was the amount of low-fat fermented dairy products, such as yogurt, fromage frais (a fresh, low-fat curd cheese similar to cottage cheese), and low-fat cottage cheese participants ate, Forouhi's group found.

For those who ate the most of these foods, the risk of developing diabetes shrank 24 percent, compared with those who didn't eat any, the study found.

When the investigators looked specifically at yogurt, the risk of developing diabetes was reduced by 28 percent.

The lowered risk was seen among people who ate about 4.5 standard 125-gram cups (about 4.4 ounces each) of yogurt a week. This was also the case for other low-fat fermented dairy products, such as low-fat unripened cheeses, including fromage frais and low-fat cottage cheese, the researchers reported.

In addition, eating yogurt instead of other snacks, such as chips, further cut the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, they noted.

Including fermented foods like yogurt as part of an overall healthy diet is a good idea but is not the whole story, nutritionist Heller said.

"A primary risk factor for type 2 diabetes is being overweight or obese," Heller said. "Regular [exercise](#), shifting to a more plant-based diet and reaching and maintaining a healthy weight will go a long way in helping to prevent type 2 diabetes."



Copyright © 2014 HealthDay. All rights reserved.

SOURCES: Nita Forouhi, M.D., group leader, nutritional epidemiology program, Medical Research Council, University of [Cambridge, England](#); Samantha Heller, M.S., R.D., senior clinical nutritionist, NYU Langone Medical Center, New York City; Feb. 5, 2014, *Diabetologia*

- News Articles
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [4](#)
- [5](#)