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THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

75% of the world's adult population is lactose intolerant. Lactose in cow's milk is difficult to digest and can cause bloating, gas, cramps and diarrhoea. Try a non-dairy milk alternative and see how you feel.

FITNESS TIP

Enjoy the increased benefits of no longer feeling bloated and sluggish. See if non-dairy helps boost your energy levels.

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RECENT research has found that 32% of British adults are drinking oat, almond, soy and rice-based milks, up from 25% in the previous year.

The biggest consumers of non-dairy milk are 16-24-year-olds, with 23% of those polled saying they chose plant-milk because they believed it was better for their health.

The shift in favour of dairy-free alternatives may also be due, in part, to the Covid-19 pandemic – 26% said they were drawn to plant-based milk because of the coronavirus outbreak.

It's important to note cow's milk is a great source of calcium, protein and healthy fats, all essential as part of a balanced diet. However, concerns around health, ethics and the environment are more reasons why cow's milk is being dropped for plant-based alternatives such as almond, soy or coconut.

Cow's milk is a combination of water, whey and casein protein, globules of fat, lactose, and some vitamins and minerals. Humans have consumed cow's milk for hun-

dreds of years but experts now have conflicting opinions about whether it's good for you.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS

Benefits of drinking milk:

- Excellent source of Calcium and Vitamin D, which help prevent osteoporosis. Milk is very good for healthy bones and teeth.
- One cup covers our recommended daily intake of Vitamin B12.
- It contains double the protein of soy milk.
- It is fortified with minerals and vitamins plus has no added sugars (although there are naturally occurring sugars in cows milk).
- A versatile ingredient used widely in diet.
- Aids growth and development – especially with young people.

Some reasons to avoid cow's milk:

- Lactose intolerance causes digestive issues. 75% of the world's adult population is lactose intolerant. Lactose in cow's milk is difficult to digest and can cause bloating, gas, cramps and diarrhoea.
- Studies have linked cow's milk to



> There are plenty of non-dairy milk substitutes

increases in acne for both girls and boys.

- It's high in cholesterol but no plant-based milks contain cholesterol at all.
- Bodybuilders use milk to help bulk up for a reason – it contains antibiotics and steroids, which can affect our resistance to antibiotics.
- It's high in saturated fat.
- Cow's milk is suitable for calves who have four stomachs to digest – and they need to gain hundreds of

pounds within months – why would humans benefit from this?

- No species except humans drink milk beyond weaning age.

Benefits of non-dairy milk alternatives:

- Non-dairy milk is equally as versatile as cow's milk and there are so many varieties. There is a range of non-dairy products such as yoghurt, cheese and creams should you wish to remove dairy products altogether

from your diet.

- They are largely low in saturated fats, low in cholesterol and fortified with added vitamins and minerals.

Non-dairy alternatives:

- Almond milk
- Rice milk
- Coconut milk
- Oat milk
- Cashew milk
- Soy milk
- Hemp milk