

HEHA for HEALTH

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Dear Emmeline

I have noticed the price of cheese and butter has skyrocketed. Should I be worried about calcium in my family's diet if I stop buying them?

While delicious and helpful ingredients for cooking, cheese and butter are not what nutritionists consider staple foods – the basic foods you need to eat every day for energy and health. However, milk is needed every day, especially for growing children and teenagers while they are building up extra density in their bones just before they stop growing.

Even for adults, calcium is an essential nutrient which we can't make ourselves or do without. Milk is also an excellent source of protein and vitamin D, as well as being the most easily absorbable source of calcium. Nuts, green leafy vegetables, tinned fish, tofu and beans are also good calcium sources, but should be supplementary rather than primary sources as you need to eat an awful lot more of them to gain the equivalent amount of calcium. For example, 1 cup of baked beans would provide you with around 125 mg of calcium, compared with around 280mg from a glass of light blue milk.

If you cannot drink milk because of allergies, a milk replacement such as soymilk fortified with calcium can be used, along with regular intakes of some of the 'supplementary' sources of calcium already mentioned.

So the short answer to your question is that while it may tax your creative capacity in the kitchen, cutting out cheese and butter will not compromise your family's diet unless you are also cutting out milk.

Keep buying milk and have fun making homemade milkshakes with fresh seasonal fruit - a delicious way to treat your children's bodies and taste buds!

The message is to get back to basics. And milk is a basic.



If you have a question you want answered email
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