

The Milky Way

Shake up the row of cartons in your fridge door. Choose from these star performers for a mix that boosts you!

By Christina Sexton

Vitamin-D-Fortified Milk

Vitamin-D-fortified dairy milk packs the hidden punch of this essential nutrient to improve calcium uptake and strengthen your bones.

WHY BUY? In Australia, some alarming statistics are emerging about our low levels of vitamin D. If you're concerned, slot a carton of this milk into your fridge line-up.

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW It's widely known that vitamin D is linked to strong bones, but new research now shows that this vitamin is also connected to weight loss. Scientists have discovered that low levels of vitamin D interfere with the function of leptin, a hormone that signals your brain when you're full. Their research also showed that excess body fat absorbed the vitamin, stopping it from entering the bloodstream. As low vitamin D levels don't have obvious symptoms, you mightn't realise when you're in need of a top-up.

POURER'S GUIDE Vitamin-D-fortified milk is versatile. Use it the same way you would full-cream milk: whip it into a fresh fruit smoothie, stir it into a soup or drink it straight.

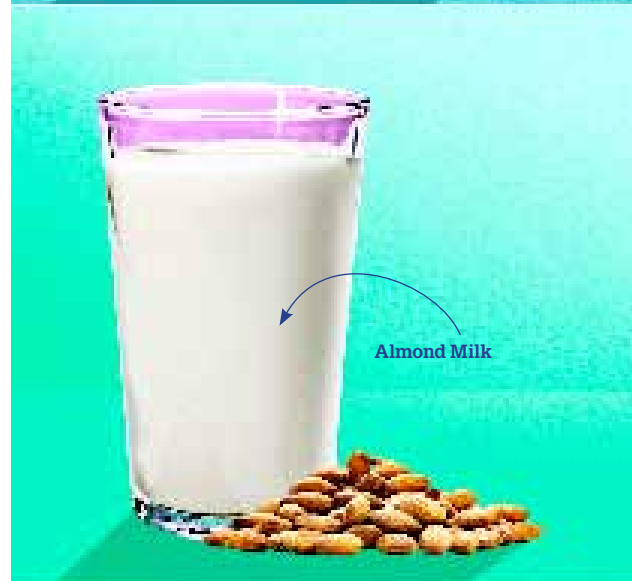
Almond Milk

Manufacturers process this nondairy milk from almonds and usually add a natural sweetener, such as rice syrup.

WHY BUY? A good choice for the lactose- and gluten-intolerant, it's also a treat for anyone who's nuts about nuts. Almond aficionados will savour the smooth, marzipanlike flavour of this creamy delight.

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW "Almonds are definitely one of nature's superfoods," says accredited practising dietitian and *Prevention* adviser Sue Radd. Like the nuts themselves, almond milk is a natural source of vitamin E. As an antioxidant, vitamin E plays a role in the formation of red blood cells and destroys free radicals, the harmful compounds that can damage your DNA. Almond milks are also rich in monounsaturated fat, which helps control your cholesterol levels.

POURER'S GUIDE Almond milk is a tasty addition to a fruit smoothie or as an ingredient in a dessert or pudding. Almond varieties are also sweet enough to drink straight (from a glass—not the carton!).





Rice Milk

Rice milk consists of brown rice, filtered water and usually a sweetener.

WHY BUY? It's a good dairy-free option for people with lactose intolerance and other digestive disorders. It's also suitable for anyone on a gluten-free diet.

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW Rice milk is high in carbs, so it can help you refuel after a big workout. But it isn't naturally high in calcium. "Always check to see whether your rice milk is calcium-fortified," says accredited practising dietitian Geraldine Georgeou. "Without the added calcium, this milk just isn't as nutritious as dairy milk."

POURER'S GUIDE Rice milk works well in a smoothie, but don't ask your barista to whip you up a rice cappuccino. "Heat affects the sugar content in rice milk," says Georgeou. "You might burn the milk before it's even heated, and it'll curdle."



Soy Milk

Soy milk is produced from harvested soybean plants that have been softened and blended with filtered water.

WHY BUY? Soy milk is vegetarian and low-GI (glycaemic index). And studies show that a soy-rich diet may help women reduce menopausal symptoms.

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW "Studies show that if girls from 5- to 11-years-old regularly drink soy milk, it reduces their breast-cancer risk in later life. The isoflavones in soy practically reprogram your risk factor as you age," says Radd. For adults, soy is a great way to lower high cholesterol.

POURER'S GUIDE Soy milk is an excellent substitute for dairy milk. But if you remember it tasting like cardboard, give it another try. "The taste has improved across all brands since it was introduced in Oz 20 years ago," says Radd. Go on, try some on your cereal.



Oat Milk

Oat milk is a dairy-free milk alternative that's made from whole oats.

WHY BUY? Like most plant-based milks, it's low in fat. Only 29% of the kilojoules in oat milk come from fat, compared with 52% in the full-cream variety.

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW Add oat milk to your mix if you need more fibre in your diet, says *Prevention* food editor Judy Davie. "Oat milk is rich in beta-glucan, a soluble fibre that actively lowers cholesterol." Just check the label before pouring this one for your children: "Again, oat milk isn't naturally high in calcium, so it won't help kids meet their daily requirement, unless it's been specially fortified," says Georgeou. Oat-milk-drinking adults will also need to get their calcium elsewhere.

POURER'S GUIDE With its sweet and creamy texture, oat milk is a satisfying afternoon snack.

Organic Milk

Organic dairy milk comes from cows that have been raised as naturally as possible—free from synthetic pesticides and fertilisers.

WHY BUY? "Going organic with your milk is mostly a personal choice; you may be concerned about traditional milk's farming methods," says Georgeou. "Just keep in mind that organic doesn't mean fat-free. When possible, choose a light option to keep your saturated-fat level down."

NUTRITION KNOW-HOW In Australia, organic milk isn't significantly nutritionally different from regular milk: both provide essential nutrients, such as vitamins A and B12, and are high-quality proteins.

POURER'S GUIDE You can use organic milk in the same way you would a nonorganic milk. Cook with it, drink it or splash it into your morning coffee to help you get through the daily grind. **P**