

**COW**

Dairy packs the most protein—8 g per cup—and gets you 30 percent of the way to your daily calcium needs. Opt for 2 percent over skim, which has less of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and E.

ALMOND

While almonds are a good source of protein and fiber, most of those nutrients are lost when the liquid is strained from the pulp to make milk. What is left: immunity-boosting vitamin E—and 35 calories per cup (for the unsweetened variety).

RICE

A safe choice if you have dairy, soy, or nut allergies or intolerances. But this grain-base milk has more calories and carbs per serving than the rest, so figure that into your daily nutritional stats.

HEMP

Hemp seeds contain heart- and brain-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, but the milk can have a very slight fishy taste, so it's best as a mix-in.

[CALCIUM QUOTIENT]

Not all nondairy milks are fortified with calcium, so don't count on it. Check labels to see exactly how much you're getting.

SOY

Made from crushed soybeans, soymilk has nearly as much protein as cow's milk, with 7 g per cup. And it's plant-base protein that might lower heart disease risk. Some experts believe soy products might be harmful in high amounts, but the American Institute of Cancer Research has OKed up to 2 servings (1 serving = 1 cup soy milk or ½ cup tofu or edamame) daily.

COCONUT

A rich-tasting nondairy option, the coconut beverages in the refrigerator case are made by mixing coconut "meat" with water (more than in the canned version). Although it has no protein, it does have lauric acid, a saturated fat that raises your HDL, or "good," cholesterol more than it raises your LDL, or "bad" cholesterol.

CASHEW

One cup has half of your daily vitamin E needs, and it tends to be creamier than other nut milks.

the milky way

As you browse the options—dairy and non—here's what to consider. Even if you're not lactose-intolerant, you might want to try changing up your routine.

GOOD TO KNOW

1 WATCH THE SUGAR Many nondairy milks—even if they're labeled "plain"—have added sugar. Make the unsweetened versions your everyday staples.

2 MIX IT UP Consider rotating the type of milk you use so you'll get a variety of nutrients—especially if you don't do dairy.

3 DIGEST THIS An option for the lactose-intolerant, "lactose-free" milk has lactase, which breaks down lactose into the more easily digested glucose and galactose. ■

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