

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations established World Milk Day 16 years ago to celebrate milk as a global food, highlighting the nutrition and economic importance of milk and dairy products for humankind.

Yet recognition of the importance and integral place of dairy in the diet seems to have been eroded in our society in recent years. We, the undersigned, support this Milk Manifesto, acknowledging the important contribution milk and dairy foods make to the health of our nation across all age groups.

The best of nutrition for our children: Children have high nutritional requirements to support their rapid growth, but are also particularly at risk of obesity and dental decay where poor nutritional habits are formed. Milk is high in protein, calcium and iodine, which are important for children's growth and development. Research suggests that swapping sugary drinks with milk may help protect against childhood obesity.

Ensuring the health of our teens: The adolescent years are a time of important physical development, and can set the scene for adult health.

- Bone mineral content develops most during adolescent years, with peak bone mass being achieved in early adulthood. Milk is high in protein and calcium, as well as being a source of phosphorous, all of which are important during these crucial bone building years.
- Milk and dairy products are also the greatest contributor of iodine to the UK diet, a nutrient of concern for teenage girls and pregnant women highlighted by recent research.
- Milk is also high in vitamin B2, which contributes to normal skin, vision and nerve functioning, all important for active teens.

When it comes to nutrient content, quality and bioavailability – milk fits the bill for teenagers.

Healthy ageing in adults: Diet and lifestyle factors throughout life can affect our later years.

- Milk is high in protein and calcium, which are important for muscle and bone health. Studies show that the amino acids and proteins of dairy can be effective in maintaining muscle health and protecting against age-related loss in muscle mass and function.
- In terms of obesity, heart health and type 2 diabetes, a growing number of studies show that the consumption of milk and dairy products over many years have neutral or protective effects.

Nature's sport drink: Milk contains nutrients which aid muscle recovery and hydration after exercising. One of the most important times for a sportsman or sportswoman is the post-exercise period where there is a key window of opportunity for nutrition to make a difference. Research suggests that milk is 'nature's sports drink', and has benefits in muscle recovery and hydration after exercise. Studies show that milk can be just as effective as commercially available sports drinks when it comes to helping athletes recover from sport.

Trust in Nutrition Science: Researchers from British institutes have been central to international dairy and health science, which is evolving all the time. Furthermore, our registered health professionals advocate for the place of milk and dairy in a healthy diet, often in the face of self-styled nutrition 'experts' with sensational claims and prominence in the media. Let's celebrate the achievements of our scientists and support our health professionals in myth-busting, fighting the fads, and promoting the nutrition benefits of dairy.

The Dairy Council is a non-profit organisation that provides evidence-based information on milk, dairy, nutrition and health to consumers, health professionals and the media. The Dairy Council holds the Information Standard certificate from the NHS, awarded to trustworthy and reliable sources of health information for consumers. The Dairy Council frequently addresses myths and misconceptions about milk and dairy in the media, presenting evidence and working in tandem with evidence-makers.

We, the undersigned, support The Dairy Council's Milk Manifesto. It has never been more important that the robust scientific facts about the nutrition and health benefits of dairy are recognised and celebrated.

Dr Suzanne Barr RD
Senior Teaching Fellow in Preventive Cardiology, Imperial College London

Richard Chessor RNutr, SENr
Performance Nutritionist at British Swimming

Dr Emma Cockburn
Senior Lecturer in Sports and Exercise Physiology, Middlesex University

Dr Ben Green
Medical Affairs, Nutricia, Advanced Medical Nutrition

Dr Thomas Hill
Senior Lecturer in Nutrition, Newcastle University

Matt Lawson RD
Nutritionist at Team GB and Notts County Football Club

Dr Sue Reeves RNutr
Programme Convenor for Nutrition and Health, University of Roehampton

Kelly McCabe RD
Head of Operations at Leaders in Oncology Care

Prof Carolyn Summerbell
Professor of Human Nutrition, Durham University

Prof Margaret Rayman D Phil (Oxon), RNutr
Professor of Nutritional Medicine, University of Surrey

Melanie Wakeman
Senior Lecturer in Nutrition and Applied Physiology, Birmingham City University

Dr Oliver C Witard
Senior Lecturer in Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism, University of Stirling