Milk and Infertility – Can Dairy Make You Infertile?

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Have you ever stopped and wondered if milk and infertility are linked? There is something fundamentally odd about humans consuming dairy. Just think about it. We are the only species on the Planet that drink another mammals breast milk!

Breast milk, be it human or cow's is designed for the young one of that species for a limited period of time, before they can eat sold food, period.

In this article we will examine the link between milk and infertility and why this beloved, popular food can be so detrimental to your fertility.

We stop producing the enzyme lactase as small children (between ages 2-5). This enzyme helps break down lactose, the major sugar found in dairy products.

**Lets look at some stats on lactose intolerance:**

- 75% of adults world wide are lactose intolerant
- 30-50 million Americans are lactose intolerant
- 80% of African-Americans are lactose intolerant
- 75% of Native Americans are lactose intolerant
- 90% of Asian-Americans are lactose intolerant

When you eat dairy and you are lactose intolerant your gut becomes inflamed. This increases mucus production in the digestive system. The mucus prevents other nutrients from being absorbed. Excessive mucus production can also occur in the nose, lungs and reproductive system. That is why sniffly nose and asthma like reactions are common in people who are intolerant to dairy. The mucus in the reproductive system can be excessive and can make the sperms journey through the uterus and the fallopian tubes to the egg difficult.

**Milk and Infertility**

One study found that a major source of animal derived estrogens in the human diet are milk and dairy products, which account for 60-70% of the estrogens consumed. Humans consume milk from the cows in the second half of pregnancy when the estrogen levels are high. Due to genetic modification of the dairy cows (such as Holstein), it is quite possible that the milk consumed today is not the same as it was 100 years ago. These cows are fed a combination of grass and concentrates (grain/protein mixes and various by-products) allowing them to lactate during the second half of pregnancy.

We usually associate dairy and drinking milk with calcium, and never think about what else we may be consuming along with the calcium (and dairy, by the way is not the best source of calcium). Here is a list
of hormones which have been found in cows milk:

Prolactin, somatostatin, melatonin, oxytocin, growth hormone, lutenizing releasing hormone, thyroid stimulating hormone, estrogens, progesterone, insulin, corticosteroids and many more. Do you think an excess consumption of all these hormones result in a link between milk and infertility, and could disrupt your own hormonal balance? You bet!

In some cases milk and infertility have been linked in males. Studies have found more concentrated pesticides in cheese than in non organically grow fruit and vegetables. Excess estrogen and pesticide exposure have been linked to PCOS and Endometriosis. The first line of naturopathic treatment for PCOS and Endometriosis is to minimize intake of animal products. Animal products have a high content of hormones, pesticides and herbicides which are known endocrine disruptors. They play havoc with your hormones and this can lead to anovulation.

If you think you are addicted to cheese and milk. Guess what? You are! Milk contains natural morphine, codeine and other opiates. The feel good chemicals are in the milk so that the calf gets addicted to milk and bonds with the mother in order to survive. Morphine = Pleasure, so the calf associates pleasure with drinking milk and comes back for more.

The same chemicals make it into your cheese, which is why so many people love eating cheese. In Switzerland, it was reported that people in this cheese loving country consume an average of 20kg of cheese per year!

Like all addictions it will take some time to overcome it. It takes 21 days for the brain to break or acquire a habit. Go without cheese for 21 days and you will stop craving it. But beware, like all opiates it only takes one bite to become hooked again.

Look, I am not saying never eat dairy again (although, if you are intolerant to it, you would be doing yourself a world of good). It is hard to avoid it, as it is in everything from pizza and creamy pasta sauces to cheese cakes, yoghurts and ice creams. All I am saying is because of the association between milk and infertility, give it a miss while you are trying to get pregnant.

In this article we looked at the negative effects of dairy on fertility, in particular the link between milk and infertility. It can cause inflammation in the gut and lead to poor nutrient absorption. It can adversely affect your cervical mucus production and contribute to hormonal imbalances and anovulation. Therefore as a general rule avoid dairy unless it is organic and you are not intolerant to it, thereby avoiding any effect of milk and infertility. And avoid it altogether if you suffer from PCOS and endometriosis. The best way of finding out if you are intolerant to dairy is to have an IgG immunoglobulin test. Minimize your intake of animal products and increase the intake of organic vegetables and fibre from fruit, grains, nuts and seeds. You can get all the calcium you need from sesame seeds (Tahini), spinach, Chinese cabbage, broccoli, sea weed Kelp and Dandelion leaves.

What are you thoughts on milk and infertility? Do you eat a lot of dairy? Would you find it hard to give it up? I'd love to hear your thoughts!

Sources:


Keene, I. Natural Fertility Prescription, Switzerland, 2008.