How Dairy Affects Our Heart Disease and Diabetes Risk! Transcript

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Overview of the dairy review

How does dairy affect our health? Well, it depends on the type of dairy and what you're comparing it to, and this new systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies does an excellent job of highlighting that.

They included 34 publications from 15 cohorts in the USA, Europe and Asia, with an average follow-up time of 18.1 years.

Cardiovascular outcomes and food swaps

Regarding cardiovascular health, they found that replacing dairy products with red meat in a diet was associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular outcomes like coronary heart disease and stroke, whereas replacing butter with olive oil or replacing cheese with avocados was associated with a lower risk of some outcomes.

For type 2 diabetes, the replacement of low-fat dairy products with either processed or unprocessed red meat was a higher risk, while eggs also appeared to increase risk compared to yogurt or cheese.

Diabetes and mortality comparisons

And finally, the replacement of butter with olive oil was associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality, which is the total risk dying from all causes combined during the included studies, with similar results for the replacements of overall dairy products with whole grains.

Further, swapping out yogurt specifically with either nuts or whole-grains was also associated a low risk, whereas replacing yogurt with red or processed meat was a higher risk.

And without going through every single finding, the results are generally in line with what I've summarized. Compared to redder processed meat and sometimes even eggs, dairy products are a healthier choice, particularly low fat dairy and yogurt.

Overall takeaways and future research

But compared to whole grains, nuts and avocados, Dairy products may be a less healthy choice at least for the outcomes that were studied here. Now what i'd like to see in the future is a similar analysis on plant based dairy alternatives like plant-based milks and yogurts because that's the type of swap that a lot of people are making.