



## FOOD MATTERS

with Consultant Nutritionist Sue Radd

### MAKING SENSE OF DAIRY-FREE

If you suffer from symptoms like eczema, colic, acne, loose stools, bloating, or sinus problems, you may have an allergy to dairy products—a condition that can be life threatening for some.

The good news is that going dairy-free is not as hard as you may think, and it could even reduce your risk of other health problems.

#### what it is

A dairy-free diet is much more than just avoiding lactose—the sugar in dairy products. Dairy contains more than 25 molecules that can elicit an allergic reaction. People with a true allergy to dairy need to eliminate all dairy products and ingredients from their diet.

Many people without any allergy to dairy also choose to go dairy-free (or low-dairy) in order to reduce their intake of saturated fat and cholesterol or in the hope of avoiding migraine headaches, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer, and some other conditions that have been linked with dairy intake.

#### tips for dairy-free eating

▶ Replace all dairy foods such as milk, cheese, ice cream, cream, custard, and yogurt (including those from goats and sheep) with calcium and vitamin B<sub>12</sub>-fortified alternatives. Carefully check labels, as products like soy cheese may still contain dairy

ingredients. Tofu can be used in some recipes to replace cheese.

- ▶ Use fresh avocado, hummus, eggplant spread, or a dairy-free margarine in place of butter and margarine, which have some dairy as ingredients.
- ▶ Obtain a full list of dairy ingredients to avoid from a qualified dietitian or reputable Web site. Then inspect all packaged foods for hidden dairy ingredients. These include bread, cookies, bars, chocolate, savory snacks, and mayonnaise. Most processed foods contain at least one dairy ingredient, such as milk solids, rennet, lactalbumin, beverage whiteners, caseinates, whey, cream, or ghee.
- ▶ Choose dairy-free foods when eating out, such as a burrito with salad and avocado (hold the cheese); tofu, and vegetable stir-fry on steamed rice; bean salad with dairy-free dressing; fresh Vietnamese spring or California rolls (sushi rolls).
- ▶ Get professional advice about taking a supplement if your intake of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and dietary calcium are consistently low.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See [www.sueradd.com](http://www.sueradd.com) for more nutrition information.