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## The Bottom Line on High-Fat Dairy

If you're a long-time reader, you know that science by headlines makes me crazy because news reports often distort the findings of the research papers to make them seem more important than they are. It doesn't help that research institutions send out press releases that contribute to the hype of their research findings. Such is the case with the two papers I reviewed this week.

In the [first paper](#), researchers examined blood values of fatty acids found in high-fat dairy products as potentially decreasing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in two large cohorts. Of the 3,333 subjects who were free of diabetes when the study began, 277 developed diabetes after 15 years of follow-up. That seems to be a low number compared to the general population; keep in mind that these were studies on healthcare professionals who might have a better lifestyle than the rest of the population.

The problem is that they tested the blood for dairy fats only at the beginning of the study. While they did administer the food-frequency questionnaire every four years, there's no way to know how the dairy lipids changed over the years. At best, this is a large-study that shows some form of correlation between dairy intake and type 2 diabetes but nothing that can help us decide whether we should change the type of dairy we eat.

In the [second paper](#), they also used a similar FFQ to identify what types of dairy products the subjects used. As I've said many times, these are fraught with potential errors. On top of that, body weight gain from those who used the most low- and nonfat dairy products and those who used the most high-fat dairy products was about a tenth of a pound. If you account for the initial BMI and body weight, the results are about two tenths of a pound. That's not exactly exciting over 11 years, is it?

### The Bottom Line

I don't like to state the obvious, but I will: it could be that full-fat dairy keeps women feeling satisfied longer so they don't eat as much. That's what fat can do. But we can't really know because they did not measure diet carefully enough in either study to be able to analyze it. In these cases, the results were not really that significant and they didn't collect the right type of data to really answer the questions.

It always comes down to three words: Eat less. Eat better. Move more. If you choose to eat dairy, you can't overeat any type because while it may take more nonfat foods to reach the number of calories in high-fat dairy, eating too much is just what it says; eat too much and you gain weight.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

#### References:

1. [circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2016/03/22/CIRCULATIONAHA.115.018410](http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2016/03/22/CIRCULATIONAHA.115.018410)
2. Am J Clin Nutr 2016;103:979–88.





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