

Eating more dairy linked to \$2 billion in healthcare savings

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(Medical Xpress) -- At least two billion dollars could be slashed from the annual healthcare budget if Australians increased their dairy intake, according to a new study.

However, an estimated 65 per cent of Australians currently consume less than the recommended serves of dairy foods (milk, cheese, [yogurt](#) and custard).

Researchers from the [Health Economics](#) and Social Policy Group at the University of South Australia reviewed the [health benefits](#) of dairy consumption and calculated the healthcare expenditure in Australia due to low dairy consumption.

Co-author Professor Leonie Segal said the potential healthcare savings associated with consuming the recommended amount of dairy are significant - a sum comparable to the entire public health budget.

"The largest healthcare savings were associated with the maintenance of a healthy body weight," Prof Segal said.

"Other calculated healthcare savings came from dairy's beneficial effects on type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and osteoporosis."

The research, which was presented at the Nutrition Society conference in New Zealand this week and funded by Dairy Australia, concluded that there is strong justification for developing interventions focused on increasing [dairy consumption](#) to reduce the costs of diet-related disease.

Dairy Australia dietician, Glenys Zucco said the study reinforced the understanding that the benefits of dairy foods were far reaching.

"Dairy's health benefits are well established and this new information demonstrates further need to ensure all Australians eat the recommended daily intake of dairy foods," Ms. Zucco said.

"It's a shame so many Australians are missing out on the health and nutrition benefits dairy provides.

"[Dairy](#) foods such as milk, cheese and yogurt provide a unique package of nutrients including calcium, high quality protein, zinc, potassium and vitamin A.

"Most Australians require three serves of [dairy foods](#) every day to meet their calcium requirements. A serve is equal to a cup of milk, two slices of cheese or a tub of yogurt."

Provided by University of South Australia

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