

## Full Cream or Skim Milk?

Milk is a great addition to a healthy nutritious diet. Not only does it provide a good dose of calcium and protein, it also has many important vitamins such as Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Vitamin E, Vitamin B2 and B12. But which is better, full cream or skim?

Full cream is the most natural and unprocessed version of milk. The process of removing the fat, as in skim milk, means you are drinking a more processed version. These days we are told to eat and drink things as close to their natural form as possible. The less processed the better. But then we are also told to cut back on calories, go for the low fat option – stay lean, cut the cream. So which do you choose? Let's go over the facts.

Full cream milk contains more calories and more fat than skim milk. This is obvious. To be exact, 1 cup (250ml) of full cream milk contains 178 calories and 8.8g fat, while skim contains 90 calories and 0.3g fat. Skim milk also has slightly higher calcium and protein, and no added sugar, which is a common misconception. Fewer calories, less fat, more calcium and protein, why would you choose full cream?

As mentioned earlier, milk contains vitamin A, D and E. These vitamins are fat soluble vitamins meaning that they are absorbed better by the body in the presence of fat. So vitamin absorption is higher in full cream milk. That's an upside. Full cream is also better for satiety as the fat slows digestion, leaving you more satisfied for longer. The combination of calcium and protein alongside the saturated fat found in milk also seems to have less of an effect on cholesterol levels than once thought. Does this mean you should switch back to full cream milk?

It comes down to health goals and personal preference. If your goal is to lose weight, choosing skim milk but then having cake, doughnuts and cookies alongside, let's face it, nothing will change. But eating a well-balanced healthy diet with lots of fruit and vegetables, then choosing skim milk over full cream, will definitely help keep the calories down. If weight control is a goal, skim milk is the winner. If you are not overweight, eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet and a few extra calories in a glass of milk won't hurt, then full cream would be a perfectly logical option. It also comes down to how often you drink milk. If you are having 2-3 glasses a day, skim would be the better option. Whether it is full cream or skim milk, both reap great health benefits, so choose with your health goals and taste preference in mind and you can't go wrong!