



We Asked A Doc: What's The Deal With Dairy Being Bad For Your Skin?



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Few foods have been scrutinized in recent years like dairy. No matter how much we'll defend our right to indulge in a double scoop of praline ice cream now and again, somewhere deep down we worry that the payback for all of that deliciousness will appear in the form of pimples, blackheads, and whiteheads.

The relationship between diet and acne is highly controversial, explains [Dr. Delphine Lee](#), a dermatologist and director of the Dermatological Center for Skin Health at Providence Saint John's Health Center. But the connection isn't cut and dry. Lee reminds us about a recent study of Norwegian adolescents published in the European medical literature that showed an association between high intake of full-fat dairy products and acne in adolescence — but the same connection didn't apply when those kids consumed low or skim milk products. Confusing matters even more, a study from the American medical literature concluded that consumption of low-fat/skim milk, but not full-fat milk, was positively, definitely associated with acne, Lee says.

So, do we skip dairy altogether just to be safe or throw caution to the wind and keep gelato in the fridge at all times?

"In the past, medical literature dictated that diet did not cause acne though popular culture has continued to link diet to acne, with many believing that acne can be caused by fried or greasy foods, chocolate, dairy, and soda drinks," Lee says. "In fact, recent studies have strengthened the idea that there may be a link between certain dietary factors and acne."

In other words: if you find your skin reacting more than usual *and* you've been consuming a lot of yummy cheese in the past few days, it isn't crazy to assume the two are connected. The best way to find out if you are sensitive to dairy is to keep track of your diet and the times in which you experience unusual breakouts.

"Each individual's skin and body is different and with such variability from person to person, it is important to keep a careful record of what you are eating and the condition of your skin," Lee says. "Careful review of this, as well as implementing a good regimen for your skin care with a board certified dermatologist, will help minimize your triggers and improve your overall skin health."

Acne vulgaris Skimmed milk Dermatology Food Dairy product

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