



‘Dairy Gives You Go’ launches healthy Easy Eats for Gen Z lifestyles November 2024

Modern life, with its never-ending demands and expectations for constant high performance, is challenging the tradition of three balanced meals a day. This is increasingly true for the younger generations, who are reporting far more frequent snacking throughout the day as a replacement for the breakfast, lunch and supper regime. There are also those intentionally adopting micro-meal eating plans, which promote a routine of consuming five to six small plates a day.

While preparing and consuming smaller, more frequent meals may well save time during a busy day, there is concern amongst nutrition professionals and parents that this convenience-driven trend may be comprising the quality of nutrition for teens and young adults under 27 years, whose bodies are still developing.

The wisdom of three meals a day, rests in having the daily opportunity to put together a variety of balanced meals that meet our requirements for energy, protein and the range of vitamins and minerals required for healthy functioning and lifestyle disease prevention. But this doesn't necessarily carry over for young people who are switching to all-day snacking or even, five micro-meals. All too often, these modern eating patterns include frequent consumption of grab-and-go, energy-dense, highly processed foods including fizzy drinks, chips, chocolates, energy bars, baked goods and sweets. There is a concern that abandoning three meals a day will contribute to South Africa's already staggering rates of obesity, type 2 diabetes and other non-communicable diseases.

Dairy Gives You Go launches Easy Eats recipes

The solution for concerned parents is to encourage their Gen Z young adults to focus on healthy snacking and balanced micro-meals. The new [Easy Eats recipes](#) help young adults, especially those who are now living independently to optimise the micro-meals trend.

Registered Dietitian, Aziwe Booi says, "While the micro-meal eating plan isn't necessarily considered better than three meals a day, it doesn't have to be poor in nutritional quality. More frequent, balanced meals can assist in optimising blood sugar control and improve energy levels for young people who are under pressure to perform at their peak throughout the day, including academically. It can support digestion and may also improve satiety throughout the day, preventing binge- or over-eating due to feeling too hungry between meals. Just like the three meal-a-day tradition, the benefits of the micro-meals eating plan are in making sure that meals include a variety of foods, whole-grains, legumes, dairy, and plenty of colourful vegetables and fruit."

Why is dairy still important for 18- to 27-year-olds?

As an affordable and accessible source of high-quality nutrition, dairy plays an important role in the diet of people across all life stages. However, good nutrition that includes daily dairy consumption during the young adult life phase is essential for development of bone density, muscle formation and overall health. As an added bonus, dairy products like yoghurt, maas and cheese are great to consume on-the-go.

Dairy offers a unique spectrum of nutrients that are important to Gen Z:

1. **Calcium** - Dairy products are one of the best and most accessible dietary sources of bone-building calcium, the mineral that lays the foundation for strong bones over a lifetime.
2. **Protein** – dairy is a source of particularly high-quality protein which is responsible for muscle repair, maintenance, and growth. It is also vital for energy levels, endurance, and recovery from physical activity.
3. **B Vitamins** - Dairy provides B12 for brain health and red blood cell formation and riboflavin for energy metabolism—key for maintaining mental focus and energy.
4. **Phosphorus, potassium and magnesium** – All these minerals are provided by dairy in impactful amounts and are essential for healthy functioning of the body. Deficiencies will affect energy levels, physical and mental strength and overall health.
5. Vitamin A and zinc – support a healthy immune function.

Aziwe says, “Young adults should aim for three portions of dairy daily to meet their nutrient needs. A portion may be a 250 ml glass of milk, or 200 ml of yoghurt or maas and 40 g of cheese. To make sure you get three dairy portions daily, see where you can make simple swaps such as replacing mayonnaise with yoghurt or adding yoghurt to your curry or sauces. It’s also a good idea to use a dairy option as a straight swop for a less healthy snack. So, instead of opening a bag of chips when you are feeling peckish, open a yoghurt and sprinkle some delicious nuts, seeds or fruit on top.”

8 delicious ideas for Easy Eats

Dairy Gives You Go will be sharing eight Easy Eats videos demonstrating how dairy can quickly and easily be the hero ingredient in healthy, tasty micro-meals. The easy-to-follow recipes show how dairy adds flavour, texture and nutrition to any meal.

Quick Sticks Penne Pasta: the nutrients in the feta cheese, support healthy growth and muscle strength. Keep an eye out for the retail specials and stock up on tuna. You can also replace the tuna with other canned fish such as sardines and salmon. These are all a great source of Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Maas Flatbread: Maas (also called Amasi) is a great source of protein and calcium. You can replace the maas with yoghurt. This is such a versatile recipe and you can top the flat bread with anything you like, like cream cheese and tomatoes.

Yoghurt Bowls: Yoghurt is full of important nutrients for a healthy gut, gives additional support to the immune system and supports mental alertness. The options for toppings are endless – banana, pineapple, coconut, pecan nuts and honey or grapefruit, strawberries, banana, apple and muesli. Yoghurt Bowls provide you with energy to keep you going throughout the busy day.

Baked Potatoes: These are so easy to make in either the oven, an airfryer or you can even steam the potato in the microwave. The 40 g of cheese counts 30% towards your daily calcium needs. Did you know that you can grate cheese and store portions in the freezer. This means you can buy a bulk block of cheese, save money and store it safely.

Fried Fish Tacos: These are great with frozen hake nuggets or even fish fingers. You can buy a big box of either one and keep it in the freezer. Don't like fish, you can also use chicken or beef in this dish. The yoghurt in the tzatziki sauce is good for the gut and supports the immune system with Vitamin A and zinc. You could also use the Easy Eats Citrus Maas instead of tzatziki.

Citrus Maas Dip: The nutrients in maas support gut health. Maas is also great to muscle recovery after a gym session or a run. This dip is great with a bag of nacho chips or with fresh, crunchy vegetables. It also works well with braai meat.

Cottage Cheese Chocolate Mousse: We've had cottage cheese flat bread and cottage cheese ice cream. Now let's try this chocolate mousse. It's quick to make, low in sugar, protein rich and tastes delicious. You can use the left over cottage cheese to make a dip.

Whipped Chocolate Ice Latte: Up your morning coffee game and start your day with this Whipped Chocolate Ice Latte. Milk is full of nutrients that are good for hydration, muscle growth and energy. Use a good quality cocoa powder.

By encouraging Gen Z to make healthy eating choices and include dairy in their snacks and micro-meals, Dairy Gives You Go's Easy Eats is helping young South Africans stay energised and healthy while juggling the demands of modern life.

Gen Z are invited to try the recipes out at home, and they may go viral by sharing their creations on [Dairy Gives You Go's Instagram](#) page.

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