

Milk Processing, the Dairy Matrix and Health: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?

As dairy fat contains up to 60% saturated fatty acids (SFA), dietary guidelines have historically recommended low-fat dairy to limit SFA intake. However, current evidence does not consistently support this approach, with dairy fat consumption associated with largely neutral or favourable health outcomes and limited evidence of harm.

These findings may partly reflect the complex dairy food matrix, which includes high-quality proteins, minerals, vitamins, probiotics, and bioactive compounds. Interactions between these components may produce cumulative health effects that differ from those of individual nutrients. Outcomes may also be influenced by factors such as the type of dairy product and fat, duration of intake, and synergistic effects within the food matrix.

Consequently, dietary guidance is increasingly shifting from individual nutrients towards food-based dietary patterns that consider the overall diet and food matrix. This presentation will summarise recent evidence on dairy consumption and health and explore factors that may explain the observed effects.