

Renowned Medical Doctor Explains What He Believes Is

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"The Truth About Milk"



One of the most outspoken of the authorities challenging the traditional view of milk is Dr. William A. Ellis, a retired osteopathic physician and surgeon located in Arlington, Texas. Dr. Ellis, who has researched milk and its related problems for 42 years, is listed in Marquis' Who's Who in the East, Leaders of American Science, the Dictionary of International Biography, and Two Thousand Men of Achievement.

Dr. Ellis received his osteopathic degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy. He is the past president of the American Academy of Applied Osteopathy. We interviewed Dr. Ellis in his office in Texas. He is a robust 72, has a friendly personality, and obviously enjoyed sharing his views about milk with us.

ELLIS: I like milk, ice cream, and cheese just as much as any of your readers. But I don't eat them. I know better. They are simply no good for humans.

HEALTHVIEW: Why do you say that?

ELLIS: There is overwhelming evidence that milk and milk products are harmful to many people, both adults and infants. Milk is a contributing factor in constipation, chronic fatigue, arthritis, headaches, muscle cramps, obesity, allergies and heart problems. Also, many people suffer from undiagnosed lactose intolerance.

HEALTHVIEW: Why do you believe milk drinking causes poor absorption?

ELLIS: There are two main reasons. The first is that milk and milk products have a great ability to neutralize hydrochloric acid (HCL). This forces your stomach to work harder and harder to produce enough HCL to digest your food. Eventually, the HCL-producing glands in your stomach break down, and you don't absorb the nutrients in your food.

The second reason is that milk and cheese tend to generate excessive mucus in the intestines, sinus and lungs. The extra mucus in the intestines hardens and forms a coating on the inner lining that is relatively impermeable to nutrients. This, of course, means poor absorption. Poor absorption, in turn, means chronic fatigue.

The excessive mucus also causes a host of other problems including constipation.

Moreover, excessive mucus generated by milk and milk products is behind many respiratory ailments. As I mentioned earlier, mucus accumulates in the lungs and sinuses as well as the intestines. So it's an important factor in nasal dripping and excessive phlegm in your throat.

HEALTHVIEW: Please explain your thinking.

ELLIS: It's simple. Mucus is quite sticky. When — as is common with milk drinkers — you have excessive amounts of it in your intestines, the food sticks to it. Consequently, you have a hard time getting stools out of your intestines. They adhere to your intestinal walls.

If you have a cold and drink milk, you're just asking for an extra stuffy nose or for chest congestion. It's the same principle — mucus formation in your lungs.

If you have any of these problems — or flu — one of the smartest things you can do is cut out milk and cheese from your diet.

HEALTHVIEW: Please elaborate.

ELLIS: I know that milk is supposed to be an excellent source of calcium. There's no doubt that it's rich in calcium. It's just that many humans don't seem to be able to metabolize it properly.

Thousands and thousands of blood tests I've conducted show that people who drink 3 or 4 glasses of milk a day invariably had the lowest levels of blood calcium.

Low levels of blood calcium correspond with irritability and headaches. In addition, the low calcium level in milk drinkers also explains why milk drinkers are prone to have muscle spasms and cramps. Since calcium is necessary for muscles to relax, a lack of calcium causes muscle cramps, etc. If you're concerned about getting enough calcium, simply eat plenty of green vegetables, sesame butter and sardines, which are all rich in calcium.

ELLIS: I think a lot of it traces back to poor absorption. Milk and milk products are not metabolized well in the human system.

As you know, I'm primarily a clinical researcher, getting much of my knowledge from work with my patients. Over my 42 years of practice, I've performed more than 25,000 blood tests for my patients. These tests show, conclusively, in my opinion, that adults who use milk products do not absorb nutrients as well as adults who don't.

HEALTHVIEW: That's true. But why do you think drinking milk leads to weight problems?

ELLIS: The problem is that people drink milk instead of water to quench their thirst. They don't realize that each glass of milk is an extra 165 calories. Those 165 calories per glass add up very quickly over time. All those extra calories translate into extra weight.

The problem is even more severe with cheese. Most cheese eaters don't realize how concentrated cheese is. It takes about five quarts of milk to make a single pound of cheese. When a food's that concentrated, you don't have to eat much to put on weight.

Also, most cheese is salted, and as you know, there's quite a bit of evidence linking high salt intake with increased risk of heart problems.

HEALTHVIEW: You mentioned headaches earlier. We get a fair amount of correspondence about them. Why do you think that milk causes headaches?

ELLIS: Headaches are not generally a problem with milk, but with cheese. It's been known, for almost 200 years, that cheese does cause headaches — even though researchers just recently learned why it causes headaches.

The first scientific research on the subject was done in the 1780's by John Fothergill, an eminent British physician. He published research statistics showing a definite correlation between eating cheese and severe migraine headaches. Over the years, a number of studies by other researchers have confirmed Fothergill's findings.

But what eluded them all — until recently — was why the cheese was causing the headaches. They couldn't figure it out.

HEALTHVIEW: What was causing the headaches?

ELLIS: Tyramine, a protein in cheese. Dr. Edda Hanington showed it was the culprit in a medical study published in *Nature*, March 12, 1971.

More recently, another protein — phenylethylamine — found in many but not all cheeses, was shown to cause migraine headaches, too. That study was published in the July 6, 1974, issue of *Nature*.

HEALTHVIEW: Why would milk cause allergies?

ELLIS: The main reason is that milk overstimulates the cells in the lower two-thirds of the stomach — the ones that produce hydrochloric acid. So, when milk and milk products are constantly used, they weaken and eventually destroy the functioning of these cells. Therefore, the child ends up with hydrochloric acid deficiency.

As a result, his proteins don't digest properly and, therefore, partially undigested proteins enter the bloodstream. These proteins — because they're not fully digested — irritate tissues and provoke hives, skin rashes, and other allergic reactions.

Incidentally, a similar mechanism holds in adults, too. Because of this, cow's milk tends to provoke allergic reactions in adults, as well as infants. Moreover, cow's milk — by irritating tissues — weakens a person's resistance to other allergens. That's why a person is more likely to be allergic to ragweed, pollen, chocolate or other allergens.

HEALTHVIEW: Why would drinking milk weaken a person's resistance to other allergens?

ELLIS: That's because few adults can metabolize the protein in cow's milk properly.

The principal protein in cow's milk is casein, which is what a cow's metabolism needs for proper health. However, casein is NOT what humans primarily need.

ELLIS: This is something I feel is pretty well established. Allergy to milk is quite common, particularly among children. In fact, I recently read, in a book by Dr. Frank Oski, head of the Pediatrics Department of New York State University, that 25% of children fed cow's milk before six months will develop one or more allergies. All books on allergies I've ever studied state that milk and milk products are number one on the list of allergens.

Some of the allergic symptoms that infants develop include asthma, nasal congestion, skin rash and various chest infections, plus other, less noticed symptoms such as irritability and fatigue.

So, if you are going to have a child, do everything you can to breast feed him. If that's impossible, then try to obtain fresh raw goat's milk. Formulas should be considered only as a last resort.

However, as I said, there's no problem at all with the calcium in mother's milk. Suckling babies seem to be remarkably healthy.

HEALTHVIEW: I take it then that your views about milk don't pertain to mother's milk.

ELLIS: Oh, you're absolutely right. I think that mother's milk is the perfect food for infants.

For one thing, mother's milk contains natural substances that give a child protection against infection — for the rest of his or her life. Moreover, mother's milk — particularly the milk given during the first ten hours after birth — stimulates the child's digestive system into action.

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HEALTHVIEW: Well, we agree about cholesterol. Maybe some other time we'll go into that question. But right now, if it's not cholesterol, what is it about milk that you believe causes heart problems?

ELLIS: There are two main reasons. One of them is an enzyme in cow's milk called xanthine oxidase (XO). Xanthine oxidase causes heart problems by attacking the heart's arteries.

"From 1971 to 1974, we studied 75 patients with angina pectoris [chest pain due to heart disease] and atherosclerosis [hardening of the arteries].

"All the patients were taken off milk and given folic acid [a B-vitamin] and ascorbic acid [vitamin C], both of which combat the action of XO.

"The results were dramatic. Chest pains decreased, symptoms lessened, and each one of those patients is doing great today."

HEALTHVIEW: You mentioned you thought there were two main reasons why milk causes heart problems. If xanthine oxidase is one, what's the other?

ELLIS: Milk drinking leads to overweight problems and obesity. Certainly, there's plenty of evidence that overweight people are far more prone to heart attacks than people of normal weight.

ELLIS: Well, I do have a lot more material. But I've given your readers enough to think about for now.

* **What I suggest is this:** let your readers prove it for themselves. I suggest they eliminate all milk, cheese, and other milk products for three months. This includes products made with milk powders, such as many bakery goods, and a number of protein powders.

When I say *all* milk products, I mean all.

Don't touch even a teaspoon of milk or cream. I have found that even a teaspoon can cause problems which could take four days to get over. Have your tea or coffee without milk or cream. If your readers do this, I'm certain almost all of them will feel a radical improvement in their general health.

I think I know how your readers feel at this point. They're thinking to themselves, "How will I ever live without sour cream, cottage cheese, cheesecake, and boysenberry yogurt?" I know what it's like, because I felt the same way in the beginning. But I also know that your readers will be feeling so much healthier then before. In fact, I'll be surprised if many of them go back to milk and milk products after three months without them.

HEALTHVIEW: One last question. If, indeed, cow's milk causes so many problems, why did it come to be considered such an excellent food for humans?

ELLIS: There are a number of reasons. Perhaps the most important one is that nutritionists have continuously recommended milk as a perfect or nearly perfect food. The nutritionists went wrong when they made the assumption that the various nutrients in milk were automatically absorbed and utilized.

As we've seen, this is not the case. Theoretically, milk is indeed an excellent food — but when you've done the blood analysis on thousands of patients, as I have, you find out differently.

However, according to my lab tests, raw milk caused many of the same problems as pasteurized milk. So does yogurt, which many people feel is a good alternative to milk.

About the only safe milk product is butter, which contains only butterfat and none of the harmful components of milk. So, if you want, you can use butter.