



**For the week of  
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**Editor:**

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## Yogurt: It's the 'whey' to go

Sometimes when I open a container of yogurt, I find a bunch of watery stuff on top. Should I pour that off?

No need to. That's just whey, and it's chock-full of nutrients. Stir it up and chow down. And while you're at it, pat yourself on the back. Yogurt is a healthful snack.

There's no arguing that yogurt is full of calcium and other nutrients. In fact, a cup of yogurt can have more calcium than milk — up to 450 milligrams, compared with milk's 300 milligrams per cup. And plain yogurt is a great (though admittedly not perfect) substitute for sour cream, mayonnaise and other hip-widening ingredients in recipes.

But not all yogurt is created equal. Basically, yogurt is made by mixing bacteria (lactobacilli) with milk and letting it ferment. The bacteria multiply, the milk thickens, and the process converts lactose — milk sugar — into lactic acid. That's why yogurt is tart, and why people with lactose intolerance can more easily digest yogurt.

Many people believe it's the bacteria in yogurt that make it so

remarkable. Many labels brag, "Contains live and active cultures." That's what you want. If you see "Made with active cultures" on the label, don't get excited. All yogurt is made with active cultures. But sometimes the number of live and active bacteria may decrease at the end of the shelf life of the product, or bacteria can be killed if yogurt is heat treated or pasteurized after culturing.

It's also thought that yogurt may help prevent diarrhea, especially if you're taking antibiotics. Antibiotics often kill "good" bacteria in your gut — it's thought that yogurt can help replenish the good guys and give a boost to your digestive system. However, there's some question on whether the live bacteria in yogurt are able to survive when they come up against the harsh acids in your stomach. They might not make it to the lower intestine. But there's still a lot to learn about how bacteria we consume might benefit digestion. If there are benefits, you might as well get them.

*Chow Line is a service of The Ohio State University. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*