

## The Weird Link Between Skim Milk and Acne

By *Korin Miller* // June 10, 2016 9:00 Am



You may have heard that there's a link between having dairy products and acne, but how legit is it, really? A team of researchers decided to find out, and the results might surprise you.

According to a new study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, there's a correlation between regularly drinking skim or low-fat milk and acne. Meaning, people who had a lot of skim or low-fat milk also tended to have acne. Bizarrely, researchers found that wasn't the case for people who drank full-fat milk.

Even study co-author Andrea L. Zaenglein, M.D., a professor of dermatology at Penn State Health's Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, was blown away. "I decided to do the study because I thought that acne being associated with skim milk made no sense," she says. "I wholly expected for the study to show no association. When the results came in I was very surprised."

Why does this link exist? Zaenglein says that it could be because the process of making milk fat-free removes some of the healthy components, particularly healthy fatty acids. "Vitamins A and D are also removed and then put back

in but without the fat they may not be absorbed as well," she says. As a result, your skin may not get all the good stuff it needs to stave off acne and stay clear.

But Gary Goldenberg, M.D., medical director of the Dermatology Faculty Practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, isn't shocked by the findings, especially since he's seen a correlation between milk and acne in his office.

"It's clear that diet and acne, as well as other skin conditions, are linked," he explains. "We also know that foods that are natural—not full of hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals are better." Goldenberg recommends that people with adult acne switch to organic dairy and meats. "We know that dairy and meat products contain hormones, which may stimulate acne formation," he says.

If you're struggling with acne and aren't sure why, experts say it's a good idea to check in with your dermatologist to see what could be going on. "Dietary modifications, including limiting or eliminating low-fat dairy, can be included as a small component of an acne treatment regimen and should be implemented in conjunction with proven medical therapies for acne," says Jessica Weiser, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist from New York Dermatology Group.

But, you want to tinker with things while you're waiting for an appointment, try switching to full-fat, organic milk and organic meats and see how that goes. "This has helped my patients—especially women with adult acne," says Goldenberg.