



SHARAN Newsletter - Issue #2 - November 2008

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Special Feature: The Truth About Milk • What you can do • Fact or Fiction? • Recipe • News from SHARAN •**



Special Feature: The Truth about Milk

As children, we were told to 'drink our milk' so that we would grow up to be big and strong.

But is milk really good for us?

Or is this something we've been taught to believe?

Did you know that:

- Milk is high in fat and cholesterol.
- The hormones and antibiotics fed to dairy cows to increase milk production end up in the milk which is sold and drunk by the consumer.
- Calcium in dairy products is not absorbed into the body as easily as that found in many plant foods like dark green leafy vegetables.
- Though dairy products are rich in calcium, the high protein content is acid yielding and results in calcium being leached out of the body. This is why people with calcium deficiency keep taking supplements despite taking plenty of milk.
- Osteoporosis occurs most commonly in countries where the most milk is consumed.
- Studies have concluded that exercise and a diet rich in vegetables ensures strong bones and not dairy foods.
- Diets rich in dairy products are associated with an increased risk of cancer, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, constipation, indigestion, arthritis, asthma, acne, allergies, depression and iron deficiency.
- Cow's milk is not a natural food for humans: many people are lactose intolerant or are affected by cow's milk allergies.
- Every mammal produces milk only for its young and the protein and other nutrient contents are suitable for that animal's growth only. Since we grow at a slower rate than calves, cow's milk is not suitable. Even a calf does not drink its mother's milk once its weaned, so why should we?
- Cow's milk has higher pesticide levels than most fruits and vegetables since cows feed on a high quantity of plants which are already contaminated with pesticides.

If you would like to learn more, see [this link on milk myths](#).

[This link](#) is a useful resource on milk and its effects.

We also need to consider the **impact of milk production on dairy cows**. Cow's milk is meant for their young. In order to produce the maximum amount of milk, cows are forcibly impregnated while their young are given up for slaughter or veal production. The cows are kept in confined spaces, fed hormones and antibiotics and hooked up to milking machines to maximize milk production. While cows can live up to 25 years, most dairy cows only live 5 - 7 years. **Learn more about cattle, milk and animal welfare [here](#).**

Milk production also has **environmental impacts** in the form of a high usage of water resources, deforestation for grazing and greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide and methane) that harm the environment and affect the climate.

What you can do

Try a milk substitute.

Milks made with soya, peanut, or rice are not only delicious but also cholesterol free and low in fat and calories. They are also free of growth hormones and other harmful additives found in cow's milk. For desserts, try using coconut, almond or oat milk. **To find recipes for rice, coconut, soy, peanut, and other nut milks, check the [milk alternatives page](#) in the recipe section on the SHARAN website.**



Eat other calcium-rich foods.

There are many foods which are much richer in calcium than cow's milk, with the added bonus of being cholesterol-free. Consider this: while **1/2 cup (118ml) of cow's milk contains 150 mg of calcium, the same quantity (1/2 cup / 100g) of almonds provides 234 mg of calcium, hazelnuts = 209 mg, cooked kale = 187 mg, parsley = 203 mg, sesame seeds = 1160 mg of calcium.** **Green leafy vegetables** are rich in calcium, and so are dried fruits like figs, apricots, nuts, almonds, brazil nuts and seeds. Other good sources include pulses like peas, beans, lentils and tofu. (Reference: www.notmilk.com/deb/092098.html) *Note: acid yielding foods like tea, coffee, wine, vinegar, salt, sugar, cola and all animal products deplete calcium. In order to retain the calcium you get from plant sources, acid yielding foods should be reduced.*

Try making your own vegan cheese!

Who said that cheese needs to be made with cow's milk? Vegan cheese can be made at home using easily available ingredients such as soya milk and tofu. There are many delicious possibilities for vegan cheese, which are low fat and cholesterol-free.

For some ideas, check the [cheese alternatives page](#) on the SHARAN website or try the recipe for delicious vegan Boursin-style cheese in the recipe section below!



Fact or Fiction?

Milk is the best source of calcium.

FICTION!

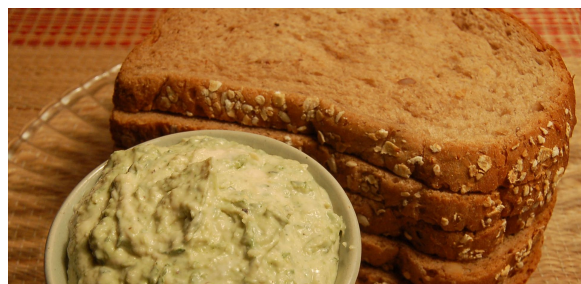
Though milk is a source of calcium, it is far from being the best source. This common misconception is propagated and sustained by the powerful dairy industry. In reality, many plant foods contain much higher amounts of calcium – see the section above for some examples of calcium-rich plant-based foods.

Recipe

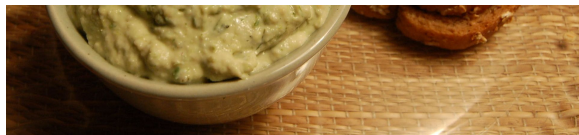
BOURSIN-STYLE VEGAN CHEESE

This is a recipe for a wonderful cheesy spread which is low in cholesterol and high in taste.

Ingredients:



100 grams tofu
 100 grams cashew butter (this can be prepared by grinding raw cashews until they form a powder and then a paste)
 1/2 tsp salt
 1-2 cloves of garlic, ground or minced fine
 4 tbsp fresh herbs (chives, basil, parsley or others according to taste)
 1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper



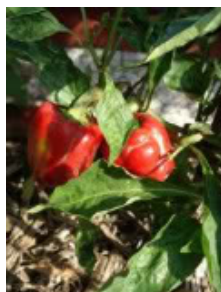
Mix the tofu and cashew butter and garlic in the blender to make a thick but creamy spread. Remove from the blender into a bowl. Add salt, finely minced fresh herbs and fresh pepper and stir together. Yeast flakes can be added for a cheesier taste if available but are not necessary.

For other exciting recipe ideas, visit the [recipes page](#) on the SHARAN website!

News from SHARAN

Dr Nandita Shah was an invited speaker at the **38th IVU World Vegetarian Congress 2008 which took place from 20th July to 2nd August in Dresden, Germany**. She spoke about the desensitisation of the human species through meat-eating and the conditioning of society to think of animals as commodities.

Deepak Suchde is conducting **organic farming workshops** at the farm on the scenic Narmada in Bajwada, Madhya Pradesh. The nearest rail station is Harda or Itarsi, and nearest airport Bhopal or Indore. The farm is now in full bloom. It's just two years and the farm is almost sufficient for all the needs of the people who stay there and there is surplus to sell. The beauty of both city farming and terrace farming (see below) is that no external inputs are used: no organic fertilisers, no organic pesticides. We work on the soil and find that if the soil is healthy, the plants will not attract any pests. For more information about the organic farming workshops, contact [Deepak Suchde by email](#) or call: +91 9329570960.



In Mumbai, Preeti's terrace garden is also in full bloom with all kinds of fruits, vegetables as well as ornamental plants. Preeti Patil conducts **terrace farming workshops** for anyone who wants to make their terrace or balconies bloom. The added bonus will be the organic vegetables and fruits you will reap. To contact Preeti or find out more contact [Preeti Patil by email](#).

Dr Nandita Shah's popular **Peas vs. Pills workshops** have inspired many to take responsibility for their own health by revealing how dietary changes can make a positive difference to health and well-being. For the past 3 years, these workshops have been presented to over 900 participants in India, Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Recently, Peas vs Pills went to Calcutta and Mumbai for the 1st time! Over 70 participants participated in the Calcutta workshop on September 11th and 12th, organised by the FICCI Ladies Association. On September 20th, 50 participants attended the Mumbai workshop hosted by The Times of India. Due to high demand, a second workshop is planned for Mumbai on November 22. On September 27th, Peas vs Pills returned to Bangalore for the 3rd time, with 30 attendees taking part at the Alliance Française de Bangalore.



Upcoming Peas vs Pills workshops:

Hyderabad: 15 November 2008

Mumbai: 22 November 2008

Auroville: 21 December 2008, 4 January 2009, 18 January 2009, 1 February 2009, 15 February 2009, 1st March 2009, 6 & 8 March 2009 (2-day workshop with French translation).

For more information, visit the [events page](#) on the SHARAN website. If you're interested in hosting a workshop in your area or to keep informed of upcoming workshops and events, contact info@sharan-india.org

Visit and join the [SHARAN India group on Facebook](#) to find out about upcoming events, join in the discussion board and meet other like-minded people!

Vegan Values and News is an interesting and informative newsletter which shares news and views on veganism on a weekly basis. If you would like to subscribe, write to [Manish](#).



What is SHARAN?

We are a non-profit organization with the goals of spreading holistic health awareness, and an ecologically sustainable compassionate lifestyle. We believe that all life on the planet is interconnected. By reconnecting we can heal ourselves and our earth.

Visit our website: <http://sharan-india.org>

Contact us: info@sharan-india.org

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