Chocolate Peanut Butter Shake

Ingredients:

- 2 frozen bananas (preferably pre-sliced before frozen)
- 1 ½ T. cocoa powder
- 1 cup milk
- 1 T. sugar or sugar-substitute
- 1 heaping T. peanut butter

Directions:

1. Blend on high power until smooth. Enjoy!

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends 3 servings of dairy per day, but with all the kinds of milk out there on the market, how do we choose which one is the best for us? Here's a little break-down of milk that may help you the next time you go to the grocery store.

What's better? Nonfat, 1 percent or 2 percent milk? When looking at calories and total grams of fat, 2 percent has the most out of these three options, with 122 calories and 4.8g total fat per 8 ounces; for the same size serving, 1 percent milk has 102 calories with 2.4g total fat, and nonfat milk has only 86 calories and 0g of fat. When monitoring calories and fat, sticking with low-fat (1%) or nonfat milk would be the best options for an overall healthy diet.

Should I avoid whole milk? Whole milk is recommended for little ones when they can drink cow's milk around the age of 1 year up until the age of 2 because of the high fat content which is good for their developing brains. Adults, however, would benefit more from a lower fat milk, since whole milk contains a high amount of saturated fat, which should be limited to less than 7% of our total calorie intake. For example someone on a 2,000-calorie diet, should get no more than 15g saturated fat daily, and whole milk has 8g saturated fat per 8 ounces, which may make it tough for someone to consume a few glasses of whole milk while keeping their saturated-fat intake at the recommended level.

What about milk that's fortified with omega-3? An 8-ounce serving of this type of milk has 32 to 50 milligrams of omega-3s, which is only a fraction of the recommended 500 milligrams daily suggested for heart health. Research suggests that supplements, even in the form added to foods, may not be as effective as the real thing. Fatty fish naturally contains omega-3s, which may be a more ideal way to consume them. It's recommended to have 2 servings of fatty fish per week.

Should I opt for organic milk? Organic milk is more costly, but some studies show that it may have more health benefits when coming from grass-fed cows. Although, strict government standards ensure that regular milk is just as pure, safe and nutritious as organic milk.

What if I'm lactose-intolerant? There are a variety of lactose-free milks on the market. They are treated with lactase, the enzyme that breaks down lactose, so it doesn't cause gas and diarrhea. Yogurt can also be well-tolerated by someone who is lactose-intolerant since it has very little lactose.

Whichever milk you choose, most people need three 1-cup servings of dairy every day, which will provide the calcium and many nutrients our bodies need.

The recipe below can be used with the milk of your choice for a delicious calcium-packed treat!