

Milk: A red herring?

What you didn't know about milk

WHAT'S IN IT

- Hormones (estrogens, progesterones, Oxytocin and growth hormones, which promote several types of cancers).
- Pus (from the udder which may be repeatedly injured by milk machines or human hands).
- Antibiotics (added to feed to keep infection under control).
- Pesticides (from the feed).
- Urea (used to prevent spoilage during transport - this damages kidneys).

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Every Indian mother's handbook probably flags off with the importance of giving her growing children loads of milk everyday. It's a cultural phenomenon - Lord Krishna loved milk and milk products, Ayurveda says it's medicinal. In our psyche, milk automatically equates to health and goodness. But how would you react if you were told that it is just

a myth? What if this was all just false propaganda carried on by the dairy industry.

Just think about it, every mammal produces milk that is suitable for its own species. In nature, no animal drinks another species' milk, and no animal drinks milk beyond infancy. Cow's milk is perfectly good for a calf but only for a calf. For example, cow's milk contains on average three times the amount of protein than human milk, which creates metabolic disturbances in humans. Type 1 diabetes may be caused by consuming cow's milk instead of mother's milk in infancy. Mother's milk is excellent nourishment for human babies, but its composition is very different from cow's milk. Breast milk is the only milk we need till we are weaned, is a necessity only till that time and is ideal for the human infant.

Let's not even talk about adulterated milk (as per reports, 65 percent of milk all over India is adulterated, often with harmful substances like detergent); Health risks are due to milk itself in its natural state which, more often than not, is a dangerous cocktail of unwanted substances.

A variety of foods can be used as a substitute for the calcium and proteins available in milk. In fact, milk actually depletes the calcium from the bones. If you look at the facts, there aren't any benefits of milk except that they may taste good and keep the stomach full for a long time and the harmful effects outweigh any supposed benefits.

The writer is the founder of SHARAN, a non profit organization concerned with disease reversal through food linked strategies for India.