

# MILKING LIFE

## Milk *is* and *can be* there—if you are willing to drink it

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**PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS**

Despite your children's begging and pleading for carbonated drinks or bottled juice, you usually tell them: "Drink your milk; it's good for you." As an adult you are well acquainted with the idea. Milk is good for health. But beyond this vague notion and the familiar milk-mustache media campaign, confusion clouds the specifics of why that is. How does it improve health?

"During childhood and adolescence, cow milk is an especially beneficial food, the calcium in milk being of particular benefit to the growth of bone and teeth," says Dr Khursheed Jahan. Seventy percent of our population suffers from Anaemia (a condition in which you don't have enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to your tissues.). Forty percent people suffer from chronic energy deficiency. Osteoporosis is common among women. In order to reach our genetic potential—both physically and mentally, there is no alternative to drinking milk." Dr Jahan is a Professor at the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, Dhaka University.

Well, you may already know all that. But wait, there is more.

Professor Peter Elwood, Institute of Primary Care & Public Health, Cardiff University, UK says via email, "Milk drinking is associated with a reduction in blood pressure, and recent research has also shown that the health and elasticity of blood vessels is directly related to milk consumption. We examined the relationships between milk consumption and heart disease, stroke and diabetes. We found small, but worthwhile reductions in these diseases." Professor Elwood is one of the world's leading epidemiologists.

So, milk packs quite a punch when it comes to nutrition and you don't have to drink a whole lot to reap the benefits. Just one 8-ounce glass of milk provides the same amount of vitamin D you would