

Myths *of* milk



Milk has always been considered an ideal food and therefore, the demand was always there. If you live in a village and you know a farmer, you can get freshly collected milk every morning. But what happens if you don't know a farmer (it happens) or what if you live in a city like Dhaka?

You can always pick up a pack of UHT milk, but you are probably worried about its nutrition value and wondering if it's even safe to consume milk that comes in these packs. Well, we are about to bust the common myths revolving around them so you can make your decision based on facts.

Myth: UHT milk lasts long because of preservatives

Reality: UHT Milk does not need preservatives for a longer shelf life. These products have long shelf life because of the way they are processed by using UHT (Ultra-high temperature) milk processing technology.

"This process removes all harmful bacteria such as salmonella, Brucella abortus, toxoplasmosis and a whole host of other critters that can cause intestinal distress or worse such as tuberculosis, brucellosis, salmonellosis and other life-threatening diseases," said Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin, Principal Dietician at United Hospital Ltd.

Myth: Pasteurised milk is safer than UHT milk
Reality:

Many believe that because pasteurised milk has a shelf life of only about a week, it is somehow more 'natural' and 'healthier' and 'safer' than UHT milk. The truth is, Pasteurized milk has a maximum shelf life of seven days and requires refrigeration because there are some bacteria still alive in the pack which reduces the shelf life. UHT process eliminates all bacteria, thus prolonging the shelf life.

Myth: The pack can spoil the milk

Reality: It's a fair question — a pack of milk that has a shelf life of about six months, won't the packet affect the milk? Won't the pack get compromised and spoil the milk itself? The answer is — no!

Tetra Pack uses an innovating 6-layer package that forms a barrier against light, moisture and oxygen, making the packet air tight and sterile, protecting it from unwanted changes or spoilage in the product.

Myth: Processed milk is less nutritious

Reality: The most common myth about not



just milk, but any processed food is that they lose their nutrition value.

"The calcium, as well as other minerals such as magnesium and potassium in milk, are not altered by either process (Pasteurisation and UHT). Both

types of milk are still excellent sources of calcium and magnesium needed for growing bones and teeth and healthy hearts," added Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin pointing out that the slight difference in nutrition values (which are negligible) can happen to any food and anywhere because of the cooking methods.

Myth: Loose milk is better

Reality: If you are adamant about using freshly collected milk for your cooking then sure, go for it. But remember, loose milk is collected by hand and you have to boil them before you can use them in any dish or drink them. If you fail to do it properly, there's a risk of food poisoning.

UHT Milk on the other hand, ensures food safety and hygiene. The product itself as well as the pack is sterile, making it a safer option. It is also creamier and thicker

than regular milk which makes it ideal for cooking purposes.

Myth: It's milk so it must be refrigerated and boiled

Reality: Because the UHT process kills all bacteria and the milk is then packed in a sterile container which prevents any exposure to external elements and the product lasts up to six months without refrigeration or preservatives. Once opened, it must be refrigerated and will last for another few days. As for boiling, the packaged milk already goes through the UHT process in which it is exposed to ultra-high temperature and then cooled. So, one could drink it without even boiling.

Myth: You can't drink milk because you are lactose intolerant

Reality: Lactose intolerance is caused by the inability to digest lactose, the main carbohydrate in dairy products. Digesting milk can be a real challenge for lactose intolerant people but one can actually get lactose free milk these days.

As an ideal food, milk never lost its appeal and it never will. But it's time for you to make a decision. Safety comes first while consuming the elementary part of your diet and UHT milk is a very safe option compared to others.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed