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The Claim: Milk Makes You Phlegmy

By ANAHAD O'CONNOR
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THE FACTS

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Leif Parsons

Many people believe milk leads to upper-respiratory [congestion](#), but studies have generally dismissed it as an old wives' tale. In [one well-known experiment](#), scientists found that even people inoculated with the [common cold](#) virus did not exhibit a statistically significant increase in symptoms or nasal secretions when they drank milk.

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[has been shown in studies](#) to stimulate mucus glands in the digestive tract. These glands are also found in the respiratory tract, where they are known to overproduce mucus in conditions caused by inflammation, like [asthma](#).

The authors assert that consuming milk containing the beta-CM-7 protein may stimulate phlegm in the respiratory tract, particularly in people with chronic lung conditions.

“These prerequisites,” they write, “could explain why only a subgroup of the population, who have increased respiratory tract mucus production, find that many of their symptoms, including asthma, improve on a dairy-elimination diet.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

There may be a link between milk and phlegm in some people, but for now it is only hypothetical.

ANAHAD O'CONNOR scitimes@nytimes.com

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