Most children were sure to have been forced to drink a glass of milk every day in the mistaken assumption that they needed it for ‘stong teeth and bones’. In fact the current dietary guidelines still recommend 2-3 servings of dairy products daily.

Dairy is a large component of the South African diet. *The Food consumption changes in South Africa since 1994* published in December 2014 shows how dairy product consumption has increased by 14.7% between 1999 – 2012 with the biggest growth in the yoghurt and soured milk segment which increased by a whopping 73.7%. In terms of consumption of drinking milk products, cow’s milk consumption increased by 7.3% with a larger increase of 16.7% in value-added flavoured milk products over the same period. Consumers are moving away from powdered milk and towards ultrahigh temperature (or UHT) milk because it is more affordable. Even if the cow’s milk you get is free of growth hormones, antibiotics, bacteria, viruses, chemicals, allergenic proteins, blood and pus typically found in milk, it is still not good for you!

Cow’s milk is designed for calves, not humans. It has 20 times the cassein of human milk and is designed to take a calf from 45kg to 500kg in about 24 months. So now consider the SA trend of buying lovely UHT processed milk:

• Homogenised milk is not natural and presents serious health risks. The theory behind homogenisation sounds simple: break up the fat particles in milk until they are so small that they remained suspended in the milk and won’t rise to the top and form the layer of cream that used to be the trademark of all bottles of milk. These fat particles become so small that they pose a problem in the same way that trans-fats do. They cause damage your arteries.

• The R-BsT growth hormones that are injected into dairy cows to increase milk production was developed by Monsanto (if you don’t know who that is then please feel free to climb back under your rock). In their submission to the FDA they claimed that it was identical to the growth hormones found naturally in cows but in July 1994 a Monsanto scientist revealed that one of the amino acids in this growth hormone is epsilon-N-acetyllysine; a FREAK substance.

• The body digests milk differently once gastric juices begin to flow (around 18 – 20 months of age). Before gastric juices flow milk is alkaline and non-mucous forming in the body. Once gastric juices enter the picture they turn the milk acid, forming mucous which causes sinus

problems, allergies, candida overgrowth etc.

• The high levels of cassein found in cow's milk are one of the reasons that humans do not digest milk proteins well leading to numerous allergic reactions. One particular protein, beta-caseine, found in cow's milk can literally trick the immune system into attacking and destroying the insulin-producing beta cells of the pancreas which eventually develops into diabetes!

Ethical issue

Most vegetarians I have met eat loads of dairy products (for the protein and calcium I am told). Having worked in the veterinary industry for many years I saw first hand how dairy cows are treated. Vegetarians wont eat meat due to ethical reasons, but what about the poor dairy cow that has to be artificially inseminated every year just so that she can fall pregnant so that she is able to produce milk. This abuse continues for 6 -7 years of her life until she can no longer produce the 40 litres of milk per day (with a little help of growth hormones of course) and she ends up as dog food. Whilst this happens she is confined to an indoor stall barely big enough to turn around in. And when she does give birth to her baby it is immediately removed from her so that the milk producers can take as much milk from her as possible in order to convert it into a freak of science so that it can live on your supermarket shelf until Armageddon. So much for the happy cows frolicking in the green grass with their cute babies.

Compare that with your average feedlot bovine who is kept in a larger outdoor enclosure and is slaughterd between the age of 6 -12 months. Now you decide which is more cruel?

Calcium

Milk undisputably has a high calcium content. BUT the body can only utilise a fraction of it; and in fact, because of the way the body deals with milk, consumption of milk actually leaches calcium from the bones. Also the 10-1 ratio of calcium to magnesium found in milk is very high and devastating to the body. Furthermore fat is needed to absorb the calcium so the the fad of drinking skimmed milk or low-fat milk means that you may as well be drinking dish-water.

It is therefore a myth that we need dairy for healthy teeth and bones. There are far superior sources of calcium such as sesame seeds, pilchards and spinach.

Antibiotic Residues

And finally milk has played a major role in the development of ‘super-bugs’. This is because by law milk is allowed to contain a certain level of antibiotic residue in it. This is based on the risk the specific antibiotic poses to the human. So for instance penicillin has no minimun allowable levels because it is lethal to some humans. However other more ‘benign’ classes of antibiotics like oxytetracyclines are allowed much higher levels. These levels are not determined by a scientific principle that has your health in mind but by a random number chosen by the FDA. As long as the test used on the tanker of milk does not pick up antibiotics it is seen fit for human consumption. Individual cow’s do not get tested so the farmer is able to mix milk from a sick cow that is being systemically treated with antibiotics with milk from the ‘healthy’ herd in order to dilute the evidence. The problem is that at this level of continual intake the antibiotics destroy the colonies normally found in our intestinal tract which then allows harmful bacteria to flourish and develop resistance to a whole range of antibiotics.