

Milk isn't just about what comes from cows

By Dana Sullivan Kilroy, Los Angeles Times

Not milk? Choosing milk for your morning cereal or coffee used to be pretty simple: skim, low-fat or whole. These days, though, market shelves and refrigerators are crowded with an array of alternatives: soy, almond, rice, hemp and more.

While some people opt for these beverages because they're vegan, they have allergies or because they're lactose intolerant, the beverages are increasingly popular for another reason too. "We're all being encouraged to eat a more plant-based diet, and some of these products fit that category," says Andrea Giancoli, a spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and a policy analyst at the Beach Cities Health District Blue Zones Project in Hermosa Beach, an initiative to develop healthier communities.

They're all slightly different in terms of nutrients – some are low in carbs and fat and others not so much – but Giancoli recommends choosing the unsweetened versions and those that also are fortified with calcium, vitamin D and, ideally, B12.

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