

Cheese is a great source of protein and calcium. Since protein curbs hunger and keeps you feeling satisfied after meals and snacks, cheese can help you to lose weight. As part of a well-rounded nutrition plan, the protein in cheese can slow down the absorption of carbohydrates eaten at the same meal or snack and therefore help balance your blood-sugar levels and improve mood as well.

The calcium in cheese can help keep your teeth and bones strong and guard against osteoporosis. In women, it can also offer some relief from PMS symptoms. Cheese contains additional nutrients like zinc and biotin. Zinc has several functions in the body: It aids in tissue growth and repair, prevents and treats macular degeneration, protects your skin, and helps keep your nails strong. Both zinc and biotin are also important for hair health.

The problem with cheese is that it's often high in saturated fat, which in excess can increase your risk of cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, arthritis, and memory loss. It can also derail your weight-loss efforts since full-fat cheese is higher in calories, as well as saturated fat. Look for cheeses that are reduced-fat and fat-free to take advantage of the nutritional benefits of cheese without any of these disadvantages. And watch out for sodium too! Cheese can contain a lot of sodium, which is especially problematic if you're concerned about your blood pressure. Read the labels and seek out cheeses that are low in sodium.

The dairy in cheese makes it a trigger for some IBS sufferers. Aged cheeses are also common triggers for those who suffer from migraines. People with celiac disease must check all cheese labels carefully, as some cheeses — including all blue cheeses — are made with bread mold.