

# Introduction

*For every human problem there is an answer  
that is simple, neat, and wrong.*

— H.L. Mencken

I sat in the studio of a radio station in northern California, facing the host of a politically progressive health talk show. Roughly two minutes remained before we went live on air. I had been invited on the show to talk about my first book, *Whole Health: The Guide to Wellness of Body and Mind*. While putting on her headphones, with the red hand of the studio clock approaching thirty seconds till show time, the host paused and looked at me.

“Oh, let’s not talk dairy issues today,” she said. “There’s a lot more we can talk about.”

Puzzled, I nodded weakly, trying to understand her last-minute directive. In our previous telephone conversation, she had expressed enthusiasm for my recently published article on health problems associated with cow’s milk. We had spoken in depth about the topic. Now she had derailed a trainload of important information I had planned to share with listeners. As she raised her hand to visually count down the last five seconds, I decided I had better abide by her request.

When the show was over, I asked her why she had changed her mind about discussing cow’s milk. The radio station, she explained, was located in the heart of a dairy-producing community, and she hadn’t wished to offend her listeners. On my way to the parking lot, while reading a promotional pamphlet I had taken from the station on my way out, I discovered

another possible motivation. The health program's primary sponsor was none other than a local dairy producer.

Unfortunately, such information-squelching occurs with great frequency, and not only to guests on radio talk shows. Despite our First Amendment right to freedom of speech, our corporate-owned media increasingly discourages people from speaking candidly on issues that might antagonize a variety of special interests. Some states even have "food disparagement" laws — also known as "veggie libel" laws — to prevent people from criticizing particular food commodities. Such laws were inspired in part by former president George Bush Sr.'s public confession that he hated broccoli, which sent broccoli sales plummeting.<sup>1</sup>

### **Uninformed, Misinformed, and Generally Confused**

Commodities and corporations don't need civil rights. But people do, especially where their health and well-being are concerned. Essential information about the products we purchase and the foods we eat should be openly available to all. Yet too often we are misinformed, or crucial health and product information is withheld from us, for purely economic reasons. A key problem is a complicit media that allows advertisers and corporate sponsors to virtually legislate content for financial reasons that override public health considerations. What magazine, radio or TV network wants to offend a company that pays them thousands or even millions of dollars a month to advertise its products? My radio experience is a small example of a pervasive problem.

More than ever before, reliable information about the food we eat is essential to our health. Many foods today contain industrial contaminants, pesticide and herbicide residues, preservatives, and other unhealthy ingredients. Our health increasingly depends upon knowing exactly what we are putting into our bodies. Without such information, how can we make informed decisions and healthy purchases? This simple concept of full disclosure and informed consumer consent is the inspiration for this book.

Most people want to live healthy and vital lives, and many adopt strategies and lifestyles they believe will protect and fortify their health. Yet most

Americans are deeply confused as to what constitutes truly healthy nutrition. Sadly, much of the official information we are given is harmful to our health, the health of our children, and even the health of our planet. Where health matters are concerned, surveys continually point to the reality of an under- or mis-informed public. Most Americans today largely base their health choices on nutritional myths, the food industry's advertising propaganda, and the compromised nutritional guidelines of bureaucratic government agencies enmeshed with and corrupted by special-interest lobbies. This book shows the devastating impact of such misinformation on our health, and how comprehensively the federal government agencies appointed to protect us have failed to do so.

Even oversight agencies sworn to protect us protect the industries that put our health at risk instead. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), refuse to level with Americans about the contaminants we are exposed to every day through the foods we eat, and also refuse to prosecute criminally negligent corporations that contaminate our ecosystem and food supply. Such bias can reach ludicrous extremes. After the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor, government officials assured the local public that the exposure level was no greater than what one would receive from wearing a radium dial watch. One nuclear industry official publicly announced that plutonium was safe for human consumption and could be sprinkled on breakfast cereal and eaten without hazard. But when an anti-nuclear organization invited him to prove his claim by attending a plutonium breakfast, he declined to attend.

Unfortunately, when it comes to information, the popular health industry is almost as unreliable as the federal government. Month after month, year after year, countless magazines, books and articles — and now websites and infomercials — serve up new dietary rules, plans and theories guaranteed to dissolve fat and miraculously improve our health. Even major newsmagazines, TV and radio networks offer daily advice on exercise, weight control, cholesterol levels, heart care, and more. But much of this information is contradictory or unsupported by scientific studies. Most of it is market-driven — geared to promote related programs, products, or

services. Some of it is downright dangerous. And each approach is generally touted as “the last,” “the best,” “the ultimate,” or even “the only diet you will ever need.”

The contradictory health directives of countless nutritionists, physicians, health experts and gurus, credentialed and otherwise, only increase our confusion. It’s no surprise that, just a few years ago, the authors of three bestselling diet books admitted to being overweight, with one approaching obesity, while a fourth, a cardiologist presenting the secrets of good nutrition, admitted to having heart disease for which he took prescription medications. No wonder so many of us feel bewildered and led astray on the road to wellness.

As the health of the average American is sacrificed to the profit motive, we are all put at increased risk of serious medical conditions like osteoporosis, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, cancer, and a host of others. Today more than ever, what we don’t know can make us sick, and eventually kill us, even while we believe we are doing all the right things.

### **The Calcium Paradox**

I wrote this book to try and explain why Americans, among the top consumers of calcium (largely by way of dairy products) in the world,<sup>2</sup> also have one of the world’s highest rates of bone fracture.<sup>3</sup> For over eighty years the milk industry, through relentless advertising and the cooperation of our public school systems and the medical professions, has hammered a myth into the collective American psyche: that cow’s milk is a healthy, calcium-rich food essential to building and maintaining strong bones and teeth. Surprisingly, our obsessive consumption of calcium derived from dairy products seems to be a detriment to our bones and our general health.

Consider these facts: societies with low-calcium diets and only a fraction of our dairy consumption have less risk and prevalence of bone fracture.<sup>4</sup> Dairy products are not dietary staples in China, Japan, Vietnam, or Thailand, yet the residents of these countries suffer some of the lowest rates of bone fracture. The same can be said for populations that consume just one third of the US recommended calcium intake. The world’s biggest consumers of cow’s milk, dairy products, and calcium — Australia, New

Zealand, North America, and Western Europe — also have the highest risk of suffering a bone fracture.<sup>5</sup>

For years, numerous studies have shown a link between dairy consumption and a variety of common ailments including allergies, acne, constipation, colitis, eczema, colic, and ear infections, to name just a few. More recently, leading researchers have uncovered an aberrant protein in milk whose presence may explain why it is so strongly correlated to risk for heart disease, Type I diabetes, and symptoms of autism. A host of insidious diseases, including bovine tuberculosis, Johne's disease (implicated as a cause of Crohn's disease in humans), leukemia and an AIDS-like condition, now infect many dairy herds. An extensive list of contaminants routinely found in dairy foods includes poisons like dioxin, pesticides, flame-retardants, dry-cleaning solvent, and even rocket fuel and radioactive substances. And yet official US recommendations for calcium intake, with a focus on dairy products, have increased, as has the incidence of bone fracture and many other illnesses and ailments, some associated with cow's milk.<sup>6</sup>

### **Ignorance in Health Care**

Another key problem is the field of conventional medicine and medical education, with their primary focus on disease intervention rather than prevention and their heavy reliance on, and aggressive promotion of, prescription drugs, surgery, and other modalities that treat existing conditions that might easily be prevented by proactive health choices and lifestyles. This is true even of many of conventional medicine's most esteemed practitioners.

The ignorance of, and lack of focus on, proactive, "preventative" health strategies and habits is most apparent in the area of nutrition and its relationship to disease. Seventy percent of all chronic degenerative diseases in America are rooted in the dietary choices we make.<sup>7</sup> Yet in an intensive education lasting a minimum of five years, most physicians receive only two-and-a-half hours (at best) of nutritional education.<sup>8</sup> This means that most doctors lack essential, in-depth knowledge of the impact of diet on the health of their patients, and so are unqualified to properly diagnose

and treat the numerous ailments that stem from poor dietary habits.<sup>9</sup> Too many doctors recommend prescription drugs and surgery for ailments that could be remedied through simple lifestyle and dietary changes.

Many otherwise legitimate health professionals, including well-credentialed nutritionists and dieticians, were brainwashed, as we were, regarding dietary matters, and perpetuate unhealthy dietary myths in good faith. In short, those professionals to whom we confide our most intimate and serious health concerns, and to whom we at times entrust our very lives, are often ill-equipped to give us wise counsel regarding diet-related issues, diseases and cures.

### **America's Health Paradox**

America is the wealthiest and most health-conscious, health-obsessed nation on Earth. Yet it also has one of the least healthy and most overweight populations.<sup>10</sup> Two of every three American adults, and more than one in three children and teens, are now overweight\* or obese.<sup>11</sup> Americans will spend a staggering \$40 billion this year alone on a vast array of diet books, pills, herbal formulas, and branded weight-loss clubs, in an effort to finally resolve their ongoing weight problems. Yet every indication is that this costly effort will continue to prove futile.<sup>12</sup> Ninety-five percent of dieters regain the weight they lose within three years.<sup>13</sup> In a sad irony, Americans spend on weight-loss efforts fifty times the amount the United Nations spends on hunger and famine relief.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, eight hundred million people in the developing world go hungry and undernourished.<sup>14</sup>

But our weight is not our only problem. Twenty-three million Americans have diabetes, and another forty million have a condition known as pre-diabetes and don't know it. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention now predicts that one in three Americans born in 2000 will develop diabetes.<sup>15</sup> One in three Americans has hypertension (high blood pressure), and one in three of these hypertension sufferers hasn't been diagnosed.

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\* The terms overweight and obese reflect a range of body weights that, based upon a given height, are considered to be unhealthful and have been shown to increase risk of serious disease. When one-third or more of a person's body weight is composed of fat, they are said to be obese.

The number of Americans diagnosed with osteoporosis leaped fifty-five percent between 1995 and 2006.<sup>16</sup> Some form of cancer will now affect one in three women and one in two men in their lifetime,<sup>17</sup> unless they adopt those lifestyle changes shown to lower risk. Seven million Americans will suffer heart attacks this year, and many of these will be fatal. Sadly, most of these health problems are self-inflicted through dietary habits and other lifestyle choices we make each day.

Our diet, level of physical activity, and exposure to certain drugs and consumer products are the most significant health determinants. Ironically, many people in less-developed nations who are not obsessed with diet, weight and fitness, eat a simpler, healthier diet, live a more active lifestyle, and enjoy far superior health to average Americans.

Yet this is not a book of doom, gloom and terrible truths presented without hope or remedy. Our decisions and choices are only as sound and reliable as the information to which we have access. In this book, you will discover explosive facts that will permanently change the way you think about the foods you eat and the sources you rely upon for dietary advice.

We'll take a comprehensive look at probably the most destructive nutritional myth of all — the one that says that humans need the milk of a cow to be healthy. We'll also look at the real factors that are contributing to the epidemic of osteoporosis occurring today in America — and I assure you, a lack of cow's milk in the diet is not one of them. We'll see how, in the process of attempting to fortify our bones, we are not only failing to achieve this goal, we are actually accomplishing just the opposite. Because osteoporosis-related fractures cost \$17 billion in medical and related costs annually in the United States<sup>18</sup> (£6.4 billion in the United Kingdom, \$650 million in Canada)<sup>19</sup> and lead to significant disability and ultimately death, health-care professionals and policymakers are understandably deeply concerned about getting a handle on this disease.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, until now, most of our efforts have been self-defeating. One of the key reasons for this failure has been our misguided preoccupation with one micronutrient: *calcium*. Americans have been told that if they can just manage to pack enough calcium into their diet — whether through food or supplements, antacids or aspirin — they'll have healthy bones. Yet surprisingly,

the quantity of calcium that one consumes ranks very low on the list of essential strategies for maintaining bone health.

We'll look at the myriad ways in which undiagnosed allergies to cow's milk can compromise health, and can produce symptoms that are often attributed to unrelated factors and therefore left unresolved for years — even for a lifetime. We'll also learn about the extensive list of dangerous contaminants routinely found in dairy foods.

We'll see that after children are weaned and introduced to cow's milk, a plethora of common health problems — such as repetitive ear infections, colitis, eczema, and constipation — become more likely. We'll also examine the role cow's milk may play in the onset of autism in certain children, and we'll hear the uplifting stories of parents who have successfully reversed their children's condition through dietary modifications.

In these pages, I reveal important health information of which many medical doctors, registered dietitians, nutritionists, athletic coaches, personal trainers, policymakers, food industry workers, and other “health experts” are unaware. You will learn why cow's milk and products made from it are not only unnecessary in your diet, their inclusion places you and your children at risk of a host of health problems. You will come to understand why and how the milk myth has been so successfully perpetuated upon us all, and how truly easy it is to leave dairy products behind. I'll also show you how unjustified the American obsession with calcium is and introduce you to a plethora of healthful foods from which you can easily obtain all the calcium and other nutrients your body needs. Finally, I hope that you will take advantage of the Resources section at the back of the book. There you will find a multitude of supportive sources to explore, from cookbooks to websites, from products to organizations, even restaurant and shopping guides. All of these resources will nurture your efforts to achieve and maintain optimal health.



## *Our Love of Milk*

*It seems ridiculous that a man, especially in the midst of his pleasures, should have to go beneath a cow like a calf three times a day — never weaned.*

— Henry David Thoreau

**M**other's milk, our first food, creates a strong emotional tie with mother, and with milk as a life-giving substance. Most of us were weaned from mother's milk to cow's milk, which plays a significant lifetime role in the average American diet. Americans love milk. In America, milk has mystique. More than a liquid, it is a symbol of goodness, nurturing, nourishment, and health. Milk and cookies, the ultimate comfort snack, and vanilla ice cream and apple pie, the homespun dessert of our forefathers, are American traditions.

According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the average American consumes approximately thirty ounces of milk, cheese, and butter a day — or six hundred pounds of dairy products a year. One of every seven grocery dollars purchases some form of cow's milk. Seventy-two percent of our dietary calcium is derived from dairy foods.<sup>1</sup> Milk-vending machines stand in high-school corridors across the nation. These statistics are a testimony to the pervasive messages promoting cow's milk and dairy foods that we receive from our earliest years.

An active weight lifter in my teens, I considered milk an essential ingredient to my muscular development. Milk advertisements equated milk

consumption with athletic prowess. Coaches at school and self-proclaimed authorities at the gym all urged heavy consumption of milk, yogurt, and cheese. My consuming a couple of quarts of milk a day was not uncommon for a serious high-school athlete. Even consuming pints of “gourmet” ice cream was justified, because it was rich in calcium and protein.

What did I get for my fanatical allegiance to dairy? Fat. During the twelve-month training period in which I consumed the most dairy products, I gained almost twenty-five pounds of body weight. It wasn't just muscle. I also developed horrible acne and my cholesterol soared to levels more suited to a man three times my age suffering from heart disease. Yet none of these symptoms raised a red flag around, or made me question, my dairy consumption.

Due to a lack of objective information and a non-stop barrage of advertisements, including “educational” health pamphlets distributed in most schools by the dairy industry, my love affair with dairy products flourished, as did my milk-induced ailments. Every source of available information, from health magazines, wellness newsletters, doctors, school coaches, personal trainers and commercials on television, confirmed the same message: Drink more milk! Milk, I was told, was “wholesome,” “nature’s perfect food,” even “patriotism in a glass.” Milk was sacrosanct, beyond reproach. To question milk was almost like questioning the American flag. Even today, some people find the suggestion that milk might pose health risks, or not live up to the promise of assured bone integrity, hard to swallow.

### **Tainted Advice**

Every five years since 1980, the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have published *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to help American consumers, dieticians, doctors, and the National School Lunch Program, determine how to plan healthful meals.<sup>2</sup> The current incarnation, “The Food Pyramid,” is about as vague and unhelpful as it’s ever been (the 2010 edition was not released at the time of writing).

You might assume that a government advisory board tasked with setting dietary guidelines would be composed of unbiased doctors, scientists, and nutritionists who understand the critical relationship between diet,

health, and disease. But you would be wrong. During the last revisions, six of the eleven advisory board members selected by the USDA and HHS had intimate ties to dairy industry institutions, including the Dairy Council, the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board, and Dairy Management, Inc.<sup>3</sup> According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, at least three members had received financing from the National Dairy Council.<sup>4</sup> Another reason to regard dietary guidelines with suspicion is that the USDA's primary job is not to encourage healthful eating, as you might assume, but rather to promote American agricultural products.

Ideally, public health organizations determining public health guidelines would be non-profit, objective, and not affiliated with industries with a biased view of our nutritional needs. But as the example above shows, that's not how it works. Much of the literature handed out by the American Dietetic Association and the American Heart Association is mired in food myths rather than reliable scientific data. The National Osteoporosis Foundation aggressively promotes the milk myth, strongly advocating the consumption of dairy products in its literature, even when the body of scientific evidence fails to support this as a truly effective way to protect bone.<sup>5</sup> Such examples raise legitimate concerns about the influence of major food lobbies, including by financial contributions.

The US government's significant role in supporting and virtually sponsoring the dairy industry also compromises its objectivity in this regard. Consider the fact that the government subsidizes the milk industry with up to \$2.5 billion in tax breaks every year, while promoting our dependence upon milk through discounted surpluses given to public schools nationwide.<sup>6</sup> When government agencies and business conglomerates become enmeshed in this way, and their mutual financial interests are at stake, objectivity is fatally compromised. Such conflicts of interest can't help playing an intrinsic role in the fashioning of public policy, and can't help influencing much of the advisory literature produced by these public/corporate "health organizations". "We are absolutely drowned in information coming out of the dairy industry," writes T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell University<sup>7</sup>, "Our national nutrition policies are corrupted by the

influences of the dairy industry.”<sup>8</sup> Contrary to what nature intended, from childhood on we’re told by a series of authority figures and institutions that cow’s milk is essential to human health. This organized, systematic campaign of indoctrination has been going on for nearly a century. As early as 1922, the dairy industry was already in schools providing “nutrition education materials.” This effective marketing strategy is still used today. A 1979 study by the American Dietetic Association found that teaching materials provided by the Dairy Council were the primary source from which teachers derived nutritional information for their classes. Today, an estimated twenty million schoolchildren each year receive the dairy industry’s promotional literature in the classroom.<sup>9</sup>

So-called “teaching aids” promoting dairy consumption, with titles like “Delicious Decisions,” “Nutrition Nibbles,” and “Food Choices to Grow On,” are mainstays in classrooms across America. In one such pamphlet, children are encouraged to check off how many glasses of milk they have consumed each day, with space provided in the chart for six glasses. Six glasses of whole milk (consisting of 3.7 percent fat) delivers a whopping 942 calories, 53 grams of fat, 210 mg of cholesterol (the recommended maximum is 300 mg/day), 714 mg of sodium, and 48 grams of protein. And that doesn’t include the average three meals a day, plus snacks. As we will see, such “Delicious Decisions” may, according to a growing body of research, be a perfect prescription for future osteoporosis, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, and elevated risk of cancer.

In the industry trade magazine *Dairy Foods*, Peggy Blitz, Chief Executive Officer of the California Dairy Council, clearly states the goal of this literature. “The Dairy Council of California’s nutrition-education programs in schools help children learn to value milk and dairy foods early in their lives, thus laying a foundation for industry promotion efforts ... it’s information that, combined with ongoing marketing efforts, can motivate Americans to take the action we want them to take even more frequently — consuming milk and other dairy foods.”<sup>10</sup> At one time, the National Dairy Council was offering \$30,000 a year in “nutrition education grants” for programs that “help increase calcium intake (presumably in the form of dairy products) among youth.”<sup>11</sup>

Just a decade ago, the Washington, D.C.–based organization Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine filed the first of several petitions with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) asserting that advertisements for dairy products violated federal advertising guidelines. Ultimately, the FTC rejected these petitions. But this was not the first time the dairy industry has been confronted about the health claims made in its advertisements.

The American Dairy Council was challenged over its advertising claims in the 1970s when the popular slogan “Every Body Needs Milk” was found to be “false, misleading, and deceptive.” An April 1974 *New York Times* article reported that the FTC filed a formal complaint of false, misleading, and deceptive advertising that implicated the California Milk Producers Advisory Board and their advertising agency. The Dairy Council agreed to modify the slogan to “Milk Has Something for Everybody.”

The California Milk Processors Board’s nationally franchised “Got Milk?” ads, with the familiar milk mustache, have generated a good deal of scrutiny from some members of the health-care community, who assert that they mislead consumers about the nutritional value of cow’s milk. In October 2005, the British Advertising Standards Authority forced Nestlé Health and Nutrition to withdraw its advertisements in the United Kingdom stating that milk was “Essential for healthy bones.”<sup>12</sup>

Why all the fuss over slogans? After all, isn’t milk simply wholesome food? Even a little too much of a “good thing” couldn’t be that bad ... could it?

## **The Weaning of America**

Although still high, sales of dairy-related products have been declining since the mid-1960s. In 1966, the average American consumed 35.5 gallons of milk. By 1976, consumption had fallen to 31.6 gallons a year; by 1986, to 28.6 gallons; and by 1997, to 26.2 gallons.<sup>13</sup> In 1999, the introduction of flavored milks boosted sales 0.7 percent.<sup>14</sup> But between 1999 and 2004, fluid milk sales dropped another 3 percent.<sup>15</sup> Still, in 2006 California’s dairy industry alone generated \$47.4 billion in economic activity.<sup>16</sup>

It is impossible to know the exact causes of this downward trend. Factors may include the rise in dairy costs, the proliferation of soft drinks

and other popular “sports beverages,” and increasing awareness and related concerns over dairy-related health problems such as lactose intolerance and dairy allergies and issues like mad cow disease and the use of rBGH, the synthetic hormone administered to some dairy cattle.

The significant decline in sales noted above would send shock waves through any big business. And industry efforts to boost sales and counter “bad press” regarding legitimate health concerns typically involve aggressive advertising campaigns and image makeovers. In this light, the “Got Milk?” ads, many starring notable celebrity athletes, icons of fitness and health, seem to have provided the financial shot in the arm the dairy industry needed. The “Got Milk?” campaign reportedly achieved a 91 percent awareness rating, leading to spin-off licensed products including watches, toys, dolls, apparel, cookies, books, kids’ accessories, and even a “Got Milk?” Barbie doll.

From a business and marketing standpoint, the success of dairy advertising campaigns is simply phenomenal. What is not so laudable, however, is the failure to acknowledge the scientific literature with regard to our current strategy for bone health. As noted, these ads leave out important health facts that refute the industry’s claims that milk products are an important ingredient in human fitness and health. The ads also reinforce milk-promoting myths, such the age-old myth that osteoporosis is caused by a calcium deficiency, *rather than by excessive calcium loss*. Milk ads are racially biased in their universal recommendation of dairy consumption, since they fail to acknowledge the high rate of lactose intolerance — the inability to digest lactose, a sugar found in cow’s milk — among African Americans (75 percent), Native Americans, and Asian Americans (nearly 100 percent).<sup>17</sup> Almost invariably, advertisements for milk and calcium supplements present them as a panacea for weak bones, yet fail to address any of the numerous other factors that play a critical role in maintaining bone health. These factors include our intake of protein, sodium, magnesium, fluoride, vitamins D and K, and other micronutrients, as well as our consumption of coffee and sugar and whether we smoke or lead sedentary lifestyles; even the medications we may take can be a factor.

In the words of Jeff Manning, executive director of the California Milk Processor Board, “This is our objective statement today: Sell More Milk. Everything that we do, every moment that I spend, gets filtered through this objective. If it doesn’t sell more milk or have the potential to sell more milk, we won’t do it — it’s that simple.”<sup>18</sup>

Speaking about the success of the “Got Milk?” campaign, Mr. Manning recalls the effect of the ads in which people indulge in some snack — such as cookies or a sandwich — and discover they have no milk left in the fridge. “We gave people the food, took the milk away, and they started to think milk was crucially important.”<sup>19</sup>

As we will see, such advertisements for cow’s milk present a biased and inaccurate perspective on human nutritional needs, and how best to fulfill these needs.

### **The Truth Isn’t in the Advertising; It’s in the Bottom Line**

The dairy industry has made clear that its primary objective is to sell as much dairy to as many people as possible. This bottom-line commitment to selling a product isn’t unethical in itself. The ethical problem occurs when an industry infiltrates and corrupts public institutions responsible for advising American consumers about their health and skews the information given to the public purely for the sake of profits. The milk industry has also donned the guise of “nutritional expert” to dispense “health advice” that is unsupported by scientific data in our public schools, again, purely as a marketing strategy.

In 2001, under pressure from consumer activists, the US government appointed a scientific panel to examine health claims commonly made in advertisements for dairy products. This panel of physicians concluded that milk “cannot be considered a ‘sports drink,’ does not specifically prevent osteoporosis, and, in its high-fat, whole milk form, might play a role in heart disease and prostate cancer.”<sup>20</sup> Critics in the United States are not alone in the effort to confront milk-promoting propaganda. The Swiss Federal Health Ministry has filed suit against the Swiss dairy industry, complaining that it “failed to provide medical proof for the health claim that milk has a preventive effect against osteoporosis.”<sup>21</sup>

You may recall the controversy that erupted in the 1970s over Nestlé's infant formula sales strategy in third-world countries. The multinational company's sales people, often wearing nurses' uniforms and offering free samples in hospitals, urged women to feed their babies Nestlé's infant formula instead of breastfeeding them. The infant formula has less nutritional value than mother's milk and contributes to numerous health problems and even deaths among infants, especially in economically underdeveloped countries.

As the Nestlé example shows, the marketing strategies of major industries selling products that promise health benefits can easily, perhaps inevitably, cross an ethical line. Such strategies have compromised and even corrupted the public institutions responsible for dispensing objective, unbiased, scientifically based health information to the public. They have imperiled the health of the public, and not just the American public.

In the next chapter we will take a look at another industry marketing strategy — the manufactured calcium crisis.