



Real Facts About Real Dairy in School Meals

Q&A Follow Up

1. Are flavored milks good for students?

Flavored milk can be part of a healthy diet, and kids drink more milk when flavors are available. Only 4% of added sugars in kids' diets come from flavored milk. Milk, flavored or not, includes 13 essential nutrients including three of four nutrients of concern, calcium, potassium, and vitamin D. Students who drink milk have higher nutrient intakes without adverse effects on weight compared to those who don't drink milk.

Supplemental Resource: [Kids & Chocolate Milk](#)

2. How can we convince teachers to let students have chocolate milk?

Students drink more milk when chocolate milk is available. When kids don't drink milk, they miss out on other key nutrients needed for growth and development that's harder to make up for in other foods. Well-nourished students are better focused and ready to learn.

Supplemental Resources: [13 Ways Milk Can Help Your Body](#) & [10 Reasons to Encourage Students to Drink Milk](#)

3. Why can't we serve strawberry milk or vanilla milk?

Strawberry and vanilla milk are allowed in the school meal patterns. If they are unavailable at your school, speak with your School Nutrition Director and/or milk distributor to see if it's an option.

4. What is the flavored milk formulation and USDA regulations requiring different levels of milk fat?

Flavored milk formulations vary between milk processors. Check with your processor/distributor for the most accurate information. Currently, fat-free flavored and unflavored milk and 1% unflavored milk is allowable in all K-12 school meal programs. Schools with a waiver can offer 1% flavored milk for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. All schools will be able to offer both fat-free and low-fat (1%) flavored and unflavored milk in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.

5. We need a dairy company to make fat free chocolate milk. Fat-free has less sodium.

Most current school chocolate milk formulations are fat-free. While the amount of sodium varies between milk processors, fat-free does not have less sodium just because it is fat free.

6. How does one reply to parents who want milk alternatives at school without simply spouting the regulations?

Dairy milk is part of the school meals program because it provides the best nutrient package for students. Dairy milk has 13 essential nutrients including three of the four nutrients lacking in kids' diets (calcium, vitamin D, and potassium). Except for soy milk for dairy allergies, milk alternatives are not recommended by nutrition experts for growing children because their overall nutritional content is not similar to dairy

Supplemental Resources: [Know Your Milk](#) & [10 Reasons to Encourage Students to Drink Milk cut & paste](#) version

7. What differences/similarities are there between different types of milks and milk alternatives?

The differences between dairy milk and milk alternatives vary by type and brand. While dairy milk's nutrients are naturally occurring, milk alternatives frequently have added nutrients and ingredients to match dairy milk's nutrient profile and texture. Compare nutrients, ingredients, and average cost with our [Know your Milk](#) resource or check the labels next time you're in the store.

8. I have several kids they don't drink milk. What should I give them to drink?

Dairy milk will provide your students with the most nutrients. Offering a variety of flavored milk leads to more students drinking milk. If a student is lactose intolerant, lactose-free milk is the best choice. For students with dairy allergies, soy milk can be offered as an alternative.

9. Could you please talk about the added benefits of yogurt?

Yogurt is a fermented dairy food made with milk and cultured with bacteria helpful to your gut microbiome. Consuming yogurt with live active cultures is good for gut health. Learn more about the benefits of yogurt [here](#).

10. How can I incorporate milk in other products or recipes that would be equivalent to a serving of milk besides yogurt and cheese?

While milk used in recipes other than smoothies does not count towards the fluid milk component, there are many ways to include milk in other recipes. Making oatmeal with milk instead of water and using milk in cream-based soups are two great ways to cook with milk. For additional ideas, check out our [10 Ways to Use Milk to Boost Your Diet](#) handout

11. I need promotional ideas.

There are many ways to promote milk and dairy with school meals. Check out our [10 Ways to Encourage Students to Drink Milk](#), and the monthly promotion guides on our [Dairy in Schools](#) webpage. In addition, you can find excellent tips and pictures from Dayle Hayes, MS, RD featuring schools from around the country at [Tips for School Meals That Rock](#) and [Tips to Succeed: School Meals in Small Rural Districts](#) on Facebook.