

## MILK: AN EXCELLENT FOOD CHOICE THROUGHOUT LIFE

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Milk is a valuable source of nutrients for growing children.

Milk contributes significant amounts of protein, calcium and riboflavin and is usually fortified with Vitamin A and D.

However, with all the media interest in low

fat and low cholesterol diets, many people are confused about the type and quantity of milk recommended for children. Nutritional needs of children may be different than adults, because of the child's special needs for growth and development. At the same time, some dietary change may be recommended because of the increasing number of children who are physically inactive. An emphasis must be placed on meeting the individual nutritional needs of each child. Therefore, it is dangerous to recommend a certain milk product for all children. The quantity and type of milk best suited for each child will depend on many variables such as their age, sex, weight, eating habits and activity level.

With the importance of individual needs in mind, the following guidelines can be used when selecting milk for children.

☆ Breast milk is the preferred milk for the first year of life. Commercially prepared formula is the best alternative to breast milk. Cow's milk is not suitable for the infant because the gastrointestinal tract may be sensitive to the protein. The age that a child is ready for cow's milk should be discussed

with the child's pediatrician, but is usually sometime after the child's first birthday.

☆ When the child has successfully made the transition from breast milk or formula to cow's milk, the next question may be whether to give the child whole, lowfat, or nonfat milk. According to current dietary advice from pediatricians and nutrition experts, whole milk should be provided to children until they reach 2 years of age. The fat in milk provides needed calories for rapidly growing infants. Young children do not receive fat from many other sources. Generally they eat small amounts of meat and mainly enjoy breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables which are lower in fat or don't contain any fat. These foods are also bulky and may not be eaten in large enough quantities by the young child to provide adequate calories. Whole milk supplies the fat and calories needed for normal growth.

☆ After age two, the type of milk recommended depends on the child's physiological needs and eating habits. Growth is slower than in infancy and may come in spurts, plus the child may be very active. At age two, most children are eating a varied diet and sharing food at the table with other family members. Consider the other sources and quantities of fat the child is eating to decide whether whole, lowfat or nonfat milk is best.

One cup of whole milk contains about 8 grams of fat (3 1/2% by weight), a cup of lowfat milk contains about 5 grams of fat (2% by weight) and a cup of skim milk contains just a trace of fat. The difference between 1 cup of whole milk and 1 cup of lowfat milk is equivalent of 3/4 teaspoon of butter. The difference between whole milk and skim milk is 2 teaspoons of butter.

### Calcium Content of Selected Foods

Milk should continue to be an important part of the child's diet as he or she grows. By the time the child reaches adolescence, lowfat or nonfat milk is most often the best choice. The fat in milk is usually no longer needed to provide calories because fat is available from many other sources in the child's diet.

The experts tell us that lack of enough calcium throughout early and middle life may lead to bone loss in old age. If children 2-10 years old drink 3 cups of milk each day they will receive their Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for calcium(800 mg). Calcium can be obtained from other food sources as well. The table attached lists the calcium content of a variety of foods.

To summarize, milk is an excellent food choice throughout life. If you have questions regarding the best milk choice for a specific situation, contact your local health department, pediatrician or registered dietitian.

Food	Calcium (MG) Per Average Serving
<b>Yogurt, lowfat, plain</b>	415
<b>Sesame Seeds, Whole , 1/4 cup</b>	348
<b>Yogurt, fruit varieties, lowfat</b>	345
<b>Milk, 2% fat with NFDM</b>	313
<b>Milk, skim - nonfat</b>	302
<b>Milk, whole, 8 oz. glass</b>	285
<b>Salmon, red, canned w/bones, 2/5 cup</b>	259
<b>Cheese, American Cheddar, 1 oz.</b>	225
<b>Leafy vegetables, avg., 1/2 cup cooked</b>	140
<b>Ice Cream, plain, avg., 3/4 cup</b>	123
<b>Artichokes</b>	102
<b>Broccoli, 2/3 cup</b>	88
<b>Baked beans, canned</b>	
w/molasses, 1/2 cup	82
w/tomato sauce, 1/2 cup	70
<b>Cream, light, 7 Tbsp.</b>	74
<b>Orange, 1 medium</b>	62
<b>Cottage cheese, 2 round Tbsp.</b>	52
<b>String beans, 2/3 cup, cooked</b>	50
<b>Parsnips, 1/2 cup, cooked</b>	44
<b>Lima Beans, 1/2 cup cooked</b>	38
<b>Salad greens, raw, avg. 2 large or 4-5 small leaves</b>	34
<b>Sesame seeds, hulled, 1/2 cup</b>	33
<b>Egg, 1 large</b>	26
<b>Figs, dried, 1 large</b>	25
canned, 3 with juice	13
<b>Bread, whole-wheat, 1 slice</b>	23
white, 1 slice (4% milk solids)	19
<b>Peanut Butter, 2 scant Tbsp.</b>	22
<b>Peas, Canned, 1/2 cup</b>	20
<b>Apricots, dried, cooked, 4 halves</b>	20
<b>Orange juice, 6 oz.</b>	20

