



DAIRY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

For young children, water and milk are the best drink choices. Milk and milk products are an important source of nutrients such as calcium, protein, energy and vitamin B₁₂.

What milk should my child be drinking?

- Infants (0-12 months of age) should only be given breastmilk or specially prepared infant formula. Cow's milk is not suitable for infants under 12 months of age and therefore should not be given as a drink, (although it can be served in small quantities with cereal and in meals).
- Children aged 1-2 years of age should be given full cream cow's milk (~4% fat). Children under 2 years of age still require the additional energy provided by full cream milk.
- For children aged 2 years and older reduced fat milk (~2% fat) is recommended. Reduced fat milk contains the same amount of calcium, protein, and vitamins as full cream, but is lower in saturated fat and energy content.

Types of milk for children over 12 months

Cow's milk is a good source of nutrients including calcium, zinc and vitamin A, riboflavin and may be fortified with vitamin D.

Powdered, evaporated or U.H.T (long life) milks are just as nutritious alternatives to fresh milk.

Many plant based milk substitutes don't have the same range of nutrients as cow's milk. They are generally lower in protein and have fewer vitamins and minerals. If using these milk substitutes look for varieties fortified with calcium (with at least 100mg calcium per 100ml). Fortified soy and rice milk is suitable for many children who cannot tolerate cow's milk. Oat, almond, quinoa and coconut milks are not suitable substitutes for cow's milk, as they do not provide the necessary nutrients for young children.

Encourage children to drink plain, unflavoured milk.

How much dairy food is needed every day?

It is recommended that children have at least 1½ – 2 serves of dairy each day.

What does 1 serve look like:

- = 1 cup (250ml) cow's milk (fresh, powdered, evaporated or U.H.T) or calcium enriched soy milk (with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml)
- = ¾ cup (200g) yoghurt
- = 2 slices (40g) of hard cheese, such as cheddar
- = ½ cup (120g) ricotta cheese



Did you know?

Milk contains a protein called casein. Casein helps prevent tooth decay by forming a protective coating on tooth crowns. Serving milk (or other dairy food) with meals will help promote good dental hygiene.



Source: *Eat for Health – Australian Dietary Guidelines*, 2013, Commonwealth of Australia, www.eatforhealth.gov.au

For more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au