

THE HARD FACTS ABOUT FLAVORED MILK



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The National Dairy Council says an 8 oz carton of flavored milk contains about **4 teaspoons (64 calories) of added sugar**,¹ plus around 12 grams of milk's natural sugar, lactose. That's a total of 28 grams of sugar per serving.*

If your child drinks it at breakfast and lunch they could be getting **8 teaspoons of added sugar, 128 extra calories, every day.** (That's more than 8oz of Coca-cola, which has over 6 teaspoons).

Over a school year, that adds up to almost **2 gallons of sugar (and 23,040 calories!)** which your child doesn't need.

This campaign is about all of us standing up to say that schools should give our kids the best nutrition possible. Kids don't need flavored milk. Please bring back plain white milk!

"Flavored milk is not the nutritional equivalent of unflavored milk. It is significantly higher in calories, sugar, and sodium, and usually contains artificial colors and flavors."
– Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Deputy Director for the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at Yale University²

Milk is a great source of nutrients for kids, but the flavored varieties have more calories, are highly processed and contain unnecessary sugars and additives, which don't add any nutritional value.

The food industry has convinced many schools and parents that they need to serve flavored milk to ensure kids get essential vitamins and minerals, and is backing flavored milk with a million dollar marketing campaign.³

Science and common sense don't back that position up. Other dairy products are a good source of nutrition and kids can get calcium from leafy greens, soy, nuts, and beans. All that's needed is those marketing dollars behind good old white milk. We know that with the right backing from the school community, kids are happy to drink it.



Kids are drinking a lot of flavored milk at school

- About 70% of the milk consumed in schools is flavored.³
- Low-fat chocolate milk is the most popular choice.⁴

More and more schools are making the move towards plain milk

Several pioneering school districts – New Haven, CT; Boulder Valley, Colorado; Washington, DC; Ventura, California – have replaced flavored milk with white. They say that although consumption drops initially, once the kids get used to it, the consumption goes back up again.

Will schools lose money if they switch out flavored for white?

In general, we're getting told that flavored milk costs more than white milk, but that in some districts it's the same. So school meal budgets should not be impacted by the switch. Schools can still receive their full federal reimbursement for lunch by offering just white milk.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Support our campaign to bring back plain milk at school

www.jamiesfoodrevolution.com/sugarymilk. Ask your school to make a simple switch for better health by choosing plain milk, and making the flavored varieties an occasional treat.

2. Call your principal or go meet with them in person to say that you're concerned about your child getting a lot of sugar from foods that are supposed to be wholesome, like flavored milk, and this is bad for their health. Ask if they serve flavored milk, and how often. If they do, ask if they would consider switching to plain milk, which has no added sugar, and keep flavored milk for a treat.

3. Give this fact sheet to every parent in your child's school. Make sure they know the facts about flavored milk.

*Formulations and sugar content varies by school district. Read your labels!



STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL FAQs

Why is the Food Revolution focusing on flavored milk?

Jamie's position on flavored milk is that it has no place in schools, and right from the start of the Food Revolution, he has advocated going back to plain, white milk. Milk is a great source of nutrients for kids, but the flavored varieties have more calories, are highly processed and contain unnecessary sugars and additives which don't add any nutritional value.

How can we encourage kids to choose white milk?

Chef Ann Cooper, better known as the "Renegade Lunch Lady", serves only white milk in the Boulder, CO schools. She says that it is important to serve the milk cold, and preferably in a glass as opposed to a carton.⁵

Kate Adamick, who has led the same change in Ventura CA, says that educating the teaching and cafeteria staff around the sugar math helps them to explain the reasons to the kids.

In Washington, DC, Jeff Mills started fresh in the fall and got very little push back. Switching at the start of a new semester is always going to be less controversial than half way through.

Flavored milk can still be served on special occasions, so the kids come to see it as a treat.

HEALTH IMPACTS AND NUTRITION

What does the research say about sugar and flavored milk?

Sugar is a contributor to the health problems that are harming our kids.

Sugary drinks are often called "liquid candy", and are an easy way for kids to consume large amounts of added sugar. Several studies have shown that drinking sugar-sweetened beverages is linked to obesity and risk for chronic disease;⁶ it seems to be the one part of kids' diets most linked to increased weight.⁷ Flavored milk is a sugary drink, along with soda, sports drinks and many juice drinks, but the majority of these studies did not include it, and there has been very little research to directly investigate the effects of flavored milk on children's health. The few studies that have been conducted were sponsored by the dairy industry.

How much sugar is too much?

Recommendations for sugar consumption vary depending on age, gender, and level of physical activity. Health experts recommend that sugar should come from our daily "budget" of discretionary, or spare calories. For example, girls between 9 and 13 who get less than 30 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, only have 130 calories to spare.⁸ The American Heart Association recommends that no more than half of your discretionary calories come from added sugar,⁹ so in this case, just 65 calories. One serving of flavored milk provides 64 calories of added sugar, which would equal a whole day's allowance.



What about using cane sugar or non-caloric natural or artificial sweeteners?

Replacing high fructose corn syrup with another sugar, such as cane sugar, does not reduce the added sugar content. Cane sugar is similar in composition to high fructose corn syrup, and neither is beneficial for children's health when consumed in high quantities.

Some processors are considering adding non-caloric sweeteners to milk, but adding any kind of sweetener teaches kids that foods need to be sweeter or flavored in order to be enjoyable, rather than encouraging them to appreciate the taste of whole, natural foods, such as plain milk. Furthermore, not enough research has been conducted to assure the safety of giving children alternative sweeteners on a regular, prolonged basis.

If we take away flavored milk, will kids get less calcium and other essential nutrients? Isn't it worth giving them the extra sugar to make sure they get these?

A Dairy Council sponsored study reported that children who drink flavored milk consume more servings of milk daily.¹⁰ However, in the majority of age groups, the flavored milk drinkers did not have a significantly higher intake of calcium, or other nutrients such as phosphorus, magnesium, or potassium than kids who just drank plain milk. Other dairy products are a good source of nutrition and kids can get calcium from leafy greens, soy, nuts, and beans. Exercise also contributes to good bone health.

"Milk, as I keep saying, is not an essential nutrient. Chocolate or strawberry milk is a dessert." – Marion Nestle, PhD, Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University¹¹

1. The National Dairy Council. Flavored Milk in Perspective. 2009. Accessed 6/1/2011. Available from: http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/child_nutrition/health_kit/FMD09177_FlavoredMilk_V13.pdf. **2.** Schwartz M. Chocolate Milk In Schools: Should It Be Banned? 2011. Accessed 6/1/2011. Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marlene-schwartz-phd/chocolate-milk-schools_b_851227.html. **3.** Severson K. A School Fight Over Chocolate Milk. The New York Times. August 24, 2010. **4.** The National Dairy Council. Raise Your Hand for Chocolate Milk. Accessed 6/1/2011. Available from: <http://www.raiseyourhand-4milk.com/>. **5.** Jeff Brady. Dairy Groups Fight to Keep Chocolate Milk on Menu. 2009. Accessed on 6/1/2011. Available from: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121238407>. **6.** Hu FB, Malik VS. Sugar-sweetened beverages and risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes: epidemiologic evidence. *Physiol Behav.* Apr 26;100(1):47-54. **7.** Must A, Barish EE, Bandini LG. Modifiable risk factors in relation to changes in BMI and fatness: what have we learned from prospective studies of school-aged children? *Int J Obes (Lond).* 2009 Jul;33(7):705-15. **8.** The United States Department of Agriculture. How many discretionary calories can I have? 2008. Accessed 6/1/2011. Available from: http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/discretionary_calories_amount_table.html. **9.** Johnson RK, Appel LJ, Brands M, Howard BV, Lefevre M, Lustig RH, Sacks F, Steffen LM, Wylie-Rosett J. Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation.* 2009 Sep 15;120(11):1011-20. **10.** Murphy MM, Douglass JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in US children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2008 Apr;108(4):631-9. **11.** Nestle M. Chocolate milk redux: Nutrifluff vs. Policy. 2009. Accessed 6/1/2011. Available from: <http://www.foodpolitics.com/2009/11/chocolate-milk-redux-nutrifluff-vs-policy/>.