



# Fact Sheet

## Use Low-fat Milk, Cheese, and Yogurt for healthier school meals

### KEY ISSUES:

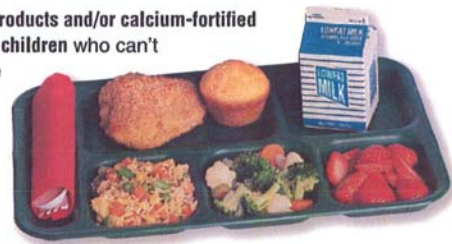
- The vast majority of children do not get the recommended amount of calcium (for 9-13 year olds, only 5 percent of girls and 25 percent of boys get the calcium they need).
- Calcium is critical for bone health, especially for growing children and teens.
- Low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk provide calcium and other nutrients without a lot of saturated fat.
- A cup of whole milk contains three times as much saturated fat as the same amount of low-fat (1%) milk (4.6 grams of saturated fat in whole milk vs. 1.5 grams in low-fat milk).
- Kids who eat school lunch drink more milk than those who don't. So, school lunch can make a real difference in children's lives.

Mom always said, "Drink your milk." Mom was right again! People who drink milk have better diets and get many important nutrients including calcium, which is abundant in milk, cheese, and yogurt.

Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

### Recipe for Success

- **Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk.** This meets the requirement to offer milk in a variety of fat contents.
- **Consider offering milk in snazzy packaging.** Kids drink more milk when it's offered in "cool" packages, like milk "chugs."
- **Offer flavored low-fat or fat-free milk** to encourage children to drink more milk.
- **Work with your local dairy** to lower the amount of added sugar in flavored milks.
- **Keep it COLD!** Ask your local dairy council about purchasing low-cost or no-cost milk coolers with promotional messages.
- **Use low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt** when cooking and baking.
- **Add milk to your vending machines,** if possible.
- **Serve low-fat yogurt dips** with raw vegetables or fruit. Kids love dips.
- **Have a milk taste test contest** by allowing students to vote for their favorite new milk flavor.
- **Create your own Milk Mustache Event!** Take pictures of students drinking milk and post them on the lunch line or cafeteria bulletin board. For more fun, include teachers.
- **Offer lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages** for children who can't consume milk. Handle on a case-by-case basis and keep a statement signed by a recognized medical authority for these students.





### USDA Commodity Food Program

Get the calcium without the fat! Schools can order cheeses with lower fat content through the USDA Commodity Food Program. Use the cheddar or mozzarella cheese as a garnish for vegetables or in salads. For the list of available foods, visit FNS' web site: [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY08-schfoods.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY08-schfoods.pdf)

### Messages for students

- Every cell in your body needs calcium. Your bones store calcium for your blood and cells. If your body doesn't get enough calcium from milk and other milk products, it takes it from your bones. And that can make your bones weak, leading to osteoporosis, a disease where bones become fragile and break easily.
- From the day you're born, calcium builds and strengthens your bones. They will be their strongest ever when you're in your 20s. To make sure your bones stay strong when you're 30, 40, or even 80, you need to start getting enough calcium TODAY!

### For more information:

[MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov)  
[teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/empoweringyouth.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/empoweringyouth.html)  
[teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/power\\_of\\_choice.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/power_of_choice.html)  
[teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/teamupbooklet.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/teamupbooklet.html)  
[www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard](http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard)  
[www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones](http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones)

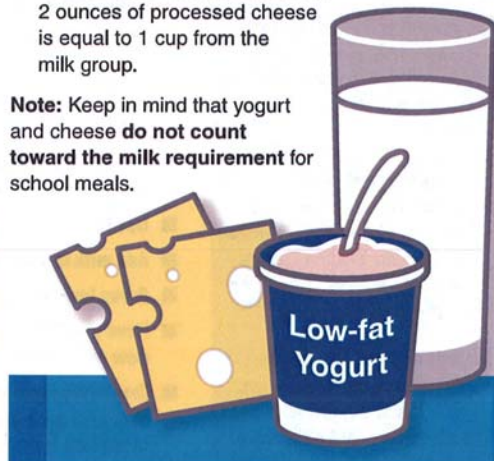
### Did you know?

The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk or equivalent amount of milk products like yogurt or cheese every day for children 9-18. Children, ages 2-8, need 2 cups.

#### What counts as 1 cup of milk?

- In general, 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese is equal to 1 cup from the milk group.

**Note:** Keep in mind that yogurt and cheese **do not count** toward the milk requirement for school meals.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Food and Nutrition  
Service