

Milk Matters

Milk is the easiest way to get calcium into kids and that's good because they need lots of it. Children ages 4-8 years old need at least 800 mg of calcium everyday in order to grow strong bones as they develop. Children ages 9-18 years old need 1300 mg of calcium daily. Unfortunately, most kids and teens do not get enough calcium on a daily basis. In our school cafeteria, we offer at least three choices of milk on a daily basis. We have 1%, 2% and low fat chocolate milk available in the hopes that every student finds a milk product they like to enjoy with lunch.

It is during these years in a child's life that bones are taking in calcium that makes them strong. Most of the calcium that makes bones strong is added by the age of 17. By eating plenty of foods rich in calcium, children can help store this important nutrient for later on when bones start to lose calcium and are no longer absorbing it. Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones can weaken and break easily. Taking in plenty of calcium in youth is the best way to prevent osteoporosis later in life.

Milk is also a very filling and satisfying food. Numerous studies have shown that children who drink an adequate amount of milk are less apt to be overweight because their bodies have received the nutrients they need to function and are therefore satisfied. They are also less likely to crave empty calorie foods, again, because their bodies are satisfied and able to work efficiently.

In an effort to help children receive the calcium and other nutrients supplied by milk, the foodservice department will only be offering juice cups as an alternative to milk at lunch for those students who have milk allergies or sensitivities. We ask that you speak to your children about the importance of choosing and drinking milk at lunch. Please remember that you as parents are the ultimate gatekeepers of your children's nutritional choices. We can help steer them in the right direction, but it is you that they are going to always listen to and model. GOT MILK?

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