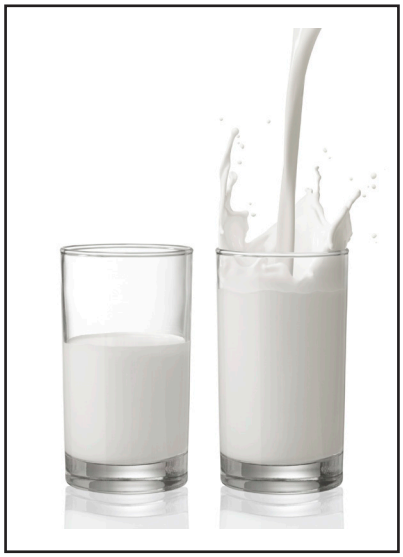
November 2019

Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Essential Nutrients in Milk

Serving milk in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a requirement for reimbursable meals. Although there are several types and sources of milk, cow's milk is the preferred source for preschoolers. It provides a tasty beverage and is filled with essential nutrients that promote healthy growth and development. Have you ever wondered what those essential nutrients are and what they do for the body?



Nine Essential Nutrients in Milk

- calcium
- protein
- potassium
- riboflavin
- phosphorus
- niacin
- vitamins A, D, and B-12

Although all of these nutrients are important for healthy growth and development, there are three that are critical for young children: calcium, vitamin D, and protein. This memo highlights how calcium, vitamin D, and protein are essential for promoting good health in the early years.

What Does Calcium, Vitamin D, and Protein Do for the Body?

- Calcium helps build strong bones and teeth. When your body is low in calcium, it will start to use calcium from your bones, which can cause your bones to weaken. Make sure children in your care get the calcium they need by giving them milk to drink.

- Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, maintain strong bones, and reduce bone loss. This vitamin is also needed for muscle movement.

- Protein is needed for the body's growth and development. It helps build, maintain, and repair body tissue. Protein is also very important to the body because it helps children to feel full.

Calcium, vitamin D, and protein have different functions in the body; however, they all work together to help with growth, keep bones strong, and assist in maintenance and repair of body tissue. To help ensure children get adequate amounts of these essential nutrients, there are specific requirements, by age, for serving milk in the CACFP to those in your care.

Newborn through 11 months old

- Breastmilk
- Iron-fortified formula

Breastmilk is allowed at any age in the CACFP.

12 months through 23 months (1 year through 1 year and 11 months)

- Unflavored whole milk

Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months to 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk.

2 years through 5 years (up to 6th birthday)

- Unflavored fat-free (skim) milk
- Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk

Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 and 25 months to help with the transition to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

6 through 12 years, 13 through 18 years, and adults

- Unflavored fat-free (skim) milk
- Flavored fat-free (skim) milk
- Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk
- Flavored low-fat (1%) milk*

*Flavored low-fat (1%) milk is allowed for children ages 6 and older and adults in the CACFP from July 1, 2018, until June 30, 2019, and is subject for updates pending Final Rule for Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements.

Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018). *Serving milk in the CACFP*.

Growth for the Year Keepsake Activity

Measure children's height on their first day of school. Continue to measure them once every month, preferably the same week each month (for example, the first Monday of each month). Put the measurements on a card or paper and present it to parents at the end of the school year.

If possible, put it in a graph form that would show the actual numbers as well as the growth in a graph form.

Sample Growth Chart		
Child's Name	**Date**	**Height**

References

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