



# Healthy Kids

LSU AgCenter Nutrition Programs Newsletter

## Milk is Your Power Drink!

Milk is the perfect drink for your bones because it gives you calcium and vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your body use the most of the calcium you give it. So every time you drink milk, you feed your bones just what they need to become strong. Did you know that your body builds nearly half its bone between ages 11 and 19? Be sure to get enough calcium NOW to help your body make strong bones. That includes teeth, too. Calcium keeps teeth healthy and strong.

How much milk should kids drink? The answer is 2 to 3 cups of milk or milk products every day! What are milk products? A few examples are yogurt, cheese and ice cream. One cup of yogurt or 1½ ounces of natural cheese is the equivalent of 1 cup of milk. It is recommended that you consume low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products. This is a better choice for you! Whole milk has about the same amount of calcium as low-fat milk but has more fat and calories.

Think you don't like milk? Give it another try! Try drinking milk that is really cold – you can even add ice cubes. Or add 1 or 2 teaspoons of flavored syrup or powder to your milk. Yum! Whole milk is great for kids ages 1-2 years old, but for older kids and adults, 1% or skim milk is a better choice. They have a lot of vitamins and minerals and a lot less fat!



*Here are a few ideas to help you drink more milk:*

- Have a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk with every meal.
- Drink low-fat chocolate milk for breakfast or as a snack.
- Start every morning with a bowl of cereal and milk.
- Ask your parents to prepare your oatmeal with milk instead of water.

# Parents' Corner

**Why milk?** Check the nutrition facts label for any milk product and find the benefits:

- ★ Calcium and vitamin D – for strong and healthy bones, including teeth
- ★ Protein – for building a growing body
- ★ Vitamin A – for healthy eyes and skin

The nutrition facts label also helps you decide which milk to buy. The best choice is skim milk. It has the same amount of vitamins and minerals as whole milk but fewer calories and less fat. If you and your children are used to drinking whole milk, first try switching to 2% milk. Once you are used to it, then switch to 1% milk, and finally to skim milk. Offer skim milk with cereal or in a smoothie first, instead of as plain milk. When adding milk to recipes, always use skim milk.



Resource: *Nibbles for Health, Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children (#7)*, USDA, FNS

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October 2005

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

This material was partially funded by USDA's Food Stamp program. The Food Stamp program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet.

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