



Healthy Choices

Start Now



When Your Child Does Not Drink Milk

Breast milk

Continue to breastfeed as long as you and your child wish. Health Canada recommends breastfeeding up to two years or beyond because breast milk is an important source of nutrition and may provide protection against illness. Cow's milk may not be needed if you are breastfeeding several times a day. When breast milk is being given to your child less than two years of age, continue to give a daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU (10µg).

Milk is important

- Milk provides energy and many essential nutrients including protein, calcium and vitamin D.
- These nutrients are needed to grow healthy bones and teeth.
- Children can get protein from other foods; however, milk is the main food source of vitamin D and an excellent source of calcium. If your child does not drink milk, they may not be getting enough calcium and vitamin D.

Children over 12 months of age need to get 500 mL (two cups) of milk every day if they are not breastfeeding. Since children's stomachs are small, you can divide this amount into several smaller servings and offer them throughout the day at meal and snack times.

- Choose pasteurized homogenized (3.25 per cent MF) plain milk for children under 24 months of age.
- Choose pasteurized plain lower fat milk (skim, 1 per cent or 2 per cent) or unflavoured fortified soy beverage for children 24 months of age or older.

If your child does not like milk, try to find the reason why:

- Is it the taste or temperature?
- Are others at the table not drinking milk?
- Does milk give your child an upset stomach or diarrhea? Speak with your child's health care provider or a Registered Dietitian if this is the case.

Tips to increase your child's interest in drinking milk

- Calmly offer milk to your child. Do not force or beg your child to drink milk.
- Offer small servings of milk (125 mL or ½ cup) at meals and snacks.
- Set an example by drinking milk yourself.
- Try serving milk in a special coloured cup or with a straw.
- Serve milk at a temperature they like. You can try adding ice cubes to make the milk really cold or try warming the milk.
- Let them pour their own milk using a small pitcher.



Ideas for adding milk to food

While your child is learning to enjoy milk:

- When preparing foods that call for water, you can often replace the water with milk.
- Choose foods or beverages that are made with or use milk, such as:
 - Breakfast cereals
 - Homemade or canned cream soups
 - Mashed potatoes
 - Oatmeal cooked in milk instead of water
 - Pancakes
 - Scrambled eggs
 - Smoothies (made with milk, plain yogurt and fruit)

Dried milk powder offers the same amount of protein, calcium and vitamin D as fluid milk when it is prepared as directed and may be less expensive than fluid milk. This prepared milk can be used in recipes that call for fluid milk.

Add dried milk powder to food

Try mixing in two tablespoons (30 mL) of milk powder to the following foods:

- 125 mL (½ cup) hot cereal (add after the water and cereal are mixed)
- 1 hamburger patty or 4 meatballs
- 250 mL (1 cup) casserole, tomato sauce, stew or macaroni and cheese
- 125 mL (½ cup) mashed potatoes
- 125 mL (½ cup) cream soup
- 250 mL (1 cup) pancake or waffle mix
- 250 mL (1 cup) of flour in bread recipes

Mix half a tablespoon (7.5 mL) of milk powder per egg when making scrambled eggs or omelettes.

Note: When 4 Tbsp. (25g) milk powder makes 250 mL (1 cup) of fluid milk, 2 Tbsp. (30 mL) powder provides the same nutrients as 125 mL (½ cup) fluid milk. This amount may differ; read the label on the product you are using.

Did you know?

- Goat's milk fortified with vitamin D and folic acid can be an alternative to cow's milk; however, if your child is allergic to cow's milk, they may also be allergic to goat's milk.
- Coconut milk, rice, nut or other plant-based beverages (other than fortified soy beverage) are not recommended as a main milk source for young children, as they are generally lower in protein and other nutrients compared to cow or fortified goat milk.

Non-milk food sources of calcium and vitamin D

If your child continues to not drink milk, here are some other sources of calcium and vitamin D.

Sources of calcium

- Plain yogurt
- Hard cheese and cottage cheese
- Fortified soy beverage (for children over 24 months of age)
- Salmon and sardines, canned with bones (mash up the bones)
- Almonds*
- Baked beans, soy beans and white beans, cooked
- Bok choy, rapini, kale, spinach and okra, boiled
- Tofu, made with calcium

Sources of vitamin D

- Fortified soy beverage (do not serve to children under 24 months of age)
- Some plain yogurts (check the label)
- Herring, mackerel, trout, tuna, salmon and sardines
- Some breakfast cereals
- Egg (with the yolk)

*Whole nuts may be a choking risk for children under four years old.



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

For nutrition information and to find out if your child (18 months to five years) is a healthy eater using Nutri-eSTEP, go to www.nutritionscreen.ca.

If you have questions about Nutri-eSTEP or about your child's eating, call Telehealth Ontario to talk to a Registered Dietitian at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007).

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