

Flavored Milk: Great Taste and Nutrition Too!

Kids love the taste of flavored milk! Flavors, such as chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, and orange, make milk exciting and fun to drink. What kids may not know is that flavored milk is also good for them. Did you know that kids and teens ages 9 and older should consume three servings of fat-free or lowfat milk or dairy foods each day? It's true! Unfortunately, three out of four children ages 9-19 do not meet their recommended dairy intake. Flavored milk can help close this gap.

Flavored milk, like white milk, provides growing kids with nutrients they need. A powerhouse of nine essential nutrients, including calcium, flavored milk not only tastes good to kids, it's good for them, too. Although flavored milk has a small amount of added sugar, it is a nutritious beverage that you can feel good about serving your child. Soft drinks and fruit drinks are the major sources of added sugar in kids' diets. These drinks provide about one-third of the added sugar kids consume. Flavored milk, on the other hand, provides only about 3 percent of the added sugar in a child's diet. Also, kids who drink flavored milk do not have higher intakes of sugar compared to kids who do not drink flavored milk.¹ Flavored milk is a delicious and nutritious drink for kids!

1. National Dairy Council, unpublished data based on the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), 1999-2002.
2. Johnson, et al. The nutritional consequences of flavored milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2002; 102(6):853-856.

Sugar "Mythbusters"

For years, sugar has been embroiled in a hotbed of controversy. And many have questioned sugar's role in a healthful diet. So what's the scoop on sugar?

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, adding small amounts of sugar to nutrient-rich foods, such as reduced fat milk products, may increase a person's intake of these foods. Sugar enhances the taste of these foods and improves nutrient intake without adding a lot of calories.

Flavored milk is an example of a nutrient-dense food that has a small amount of added sugar, increasing the palatability of milk for many kids. Don't worry! Flavored milk is still a healthy drink for your kids. Sugar in flavored milk does not cause hyperactivity and is safe for children's teeth. Studies show that sugar does not cause hyperactivity or mood swings in children. Nor does it affect learning. And because flavored milk is a liquid, it is less likely to stick to teeth and cause cavities. In fact, the calcium, phosphorus and casein (a protein) found in flavored milk may protect teeth from decay.

Flavored milk is a powerhouse of nutrients including calcium, phosphorus, vitamin D, vitamin A, vitamin B12, riboflavin, niacin, potassium and protein. Kids love it and you can too!

1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 (6th edition). www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.
2. Johnson, et al. The nutritional consequences of flavored milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2002; 102(6):853-856.