

CACFP MILK REQUIREMENTS



Milk is a required meal component for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and may be included as one of the two meal components at snack. It is the main source of calcium in the American diet, and it is packed with nine essential nutrients.

MILK REQUIREMENTS

The CACFP milk requirements change as infants and children grow due to their varying nutritional needs over time. The age of the child determines the type of milk they must be served. Milk must be pasteurized fluid milk that meets state and local standards. Regular milk, lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, buttermilk, or acidified milk are all creditable.

DID YOU KNOW?

Breast milk may be served in place of milk to children of any age.



FLAVORED MILK

- ✓ Children 1-5 years old must be served unflavored milk.
- ✓ Children 6 years and older may be served flavored milk as long as it is low-fat (1%) fat-free (skim).

Flavored milk contains significant amounts of added sugar and can increase children's preference for sugary foods and drinks.

INFANTS LESS THAN ONE YEAR OLD

- ✓ **Only breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula may be served for the entire first year of life.**
- ✓ Providers can be reimbursed when mothers breastfeed their child on-site.
- ✓ Cow's milk or non-dairy milk is **not** a substitute for infant formula.

ONE YEAR OLD CHILDREN

- ✓ **Milk must be whole and unflavored**
- ✓ For the month following a child's one year birthday, iron-fortified infant formula may be served to help with the transition.

CHILDREN TWO YEARS AND OVER

- ✓ **Milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%)**
- ✓ For the month following a child's second year birthday, whole milk and reduced fat (2%) milk may be served to help with the transition to skim or 1% milk.
- ✓ Flavored milk is not creditable for children under 6 years.

NON-DAIRY MILKS

If children cannot drink cow's milk due to lifestyle preference, ethnic, or religious reasons, they may be served non-dairy milks that are **nutritionally equivalent to cow's milks** (see the Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards chart for more detail). Creditable milk substitutes must meet the nutrition standards as described above and a Special Dietary Needs Form must be on file (the third box of part 8 must be checked and the fluid milk substitute request filled out). Non-dairy milks served to children ages 1-5 must be unflavored.

Providers must make reasonable accommodations for substitutions related to a disability (such as severe milk allergy). Non-dairy milks that do not meet the nutrition standards of cow's milk as described above are only creditable if a child has a documented disability and a Special Dietary Needs Form signed by a medical authority on file (the first box of part 8 must be checked and substitutions must be listed by the medical authority). Forms can be found at www.acdkids.org.

MILK SUBSTITUTE NUTRITION STANDARDS		
Nutrient	Per Cup (8oz)	% Daily Value
Calcium	276 mg	28%
Protein	8g	16%
Vitamin A	500 IU	10%
Vitamin D	100 IU	25%
Magnesium	24 mg	6%
Phosphorus	222 mg	22%
Potassium	349 mg	10%
Riboflavin	0.44 mg	26%
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg	18%

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Listed below are some of the common questions your peers are asking around milk requirements. Feel free to reach out to us with any additional questions or concerns at nutrition@acdkids.org

WHOLE MILK VS. SKIM MILK COMPARISON		
Nutrients	Whole milk 1 cup (8 oz)	Skim milk 1 cup (8 oz)
Water	215 g	222 g
Protein	7.7 g	8 g
Fat	3 g	0.2 g
Carbohydrate	11.7 g	12 g
Vitamin D	124 IU	115 IU
Calcium	276 mg	299 mg
Potassium	322 mg	282 mg

WHY DO I NEED TO SERVE WHOLE MILK TO ONE YEAR OLD CHILDREN?

Children under the age of two need fat for brain and nerve growth, and development. After age two, growth slows significantly and children need relatively less fat.

WHY DO I NEED TO SERVE FAT-FREE OR LOW-FAT MILK TO CHILDREN OVER TWO YEARS OF AGE?

Choosing fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products provide the same important nutrients but with less fat and fewer calories. See the Whole Milk vs. Skim Milk Comparison chart (left). Limiting fat in milk is unlikely to lead to a deficiency and helps children maintain a healthy weight.

IF I HAVE A ONE YEAR OLD AND A TWO YEAR OLD AT THE SAME MEAL, DO I NEED TO SERVE THEM DIFFERENT TYPES OF MILK?

Yes, the fat content of the milks served need to meet CACFP meal pattern requirements for different age groups in order to be reimbursable.

AM I REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A NON-DAIRY MILK IF IT IS NOT RELATED TO A DISABILITY?

No, if a request for non-dairy milk is not backed by a disability, it is at your discretion to provide it. However, it is strongly encouraged to accommodate a child's special dietary needs, even if not related to a disability.

HOW DO I MAKE THE SWITCH?

Whole Milk to Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk

Some children will not notice the switch from whole milk to lower fat milks. If they do, it may help to transition slowly. CACFP will allow a one month transition after children turn two years old. Try mixing whole milk and low-fat milk, gradually increasing the proportion of low-fat milk. The same can be done to switch from low-fat to fat-free milk.

Flavored Milk to Plain Milk

The easiest strategy for serving plain milk is to serve it from the beginning, but what can providers do if some children will only drink flavored milk?

- ✔ Serve plain milk with cereal at breakfast or snack, or in homemade smoothies.
- ✔ Try other creditable milk options such as low-fat or fat-free buttermilk or acidified milk (kefir).

MENU/CLAIM REQUIREMENTS

- ✔ Serve milk with the appropriate fat content based upon age.
- ✔ Do not serve flavored milk to children under 6 years of age.



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