

CACFP MILK REQUIREMENTS

Milk is an essential part of a child's healthy diet. It is the main source of calcium in the American diet, and it is packed with protein, calcium, and vitamin D.

MILK REQUIREMENTS

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) milk requirements change as infants and children grow because their nutritional needs vary over time.

INFANTS LESS THAN ONE YEAR OLD

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

ONE YEAR OLD CHILDREN

- ✓ Milk must be whole and unflavored. It includes regular milk, lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, buttermilk, or acidified milk.
- ✓ Milk must be pasteurized fluid milk that meets state and local standards.

CHILDREN TWO YEARS AND OLDER

- ✓ Milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) and could include regular milk, lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, buttermilk, or acidified milk.
- ✓ Flavored milk is not creditable for children under 6 years.
- ✓ Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk may **not** be served to participants over two years of age.
- ✓ Milk must be pasteurized fluid milk that meets state and local standards.



NON-DAIRY MILKS

If children cannot drink cow's milk due to medical or special dietary needs, such as the case with lactose intolerance, lifestyle preference, ethnic, or religious reasons, they may be served unflavored non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. See the Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards chart for more detail. In order to be creditable, the milk substitute must meet the nutrition standards as described above and a Special Dietary Needs Form must be on file.

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

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

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%



COMMON QUESTIONS

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions on milk requirements. Feel free to reach out to us with any additional questions or concerns at nutrition@acdkids.org!

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 2 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. Many children eat far more fat than they need. Limiting fat in milk is unlikely to lead to a deficiency and helps children maintain a healthy weight. In some cases, low-fat milk actually has more of certain nutrients than whole milk.

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.

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

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, acidified milk (kefir), or unflavored non-dairy milks that are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk.

MENU/CLAIM REQUIREMENTS

When claiming milk be sure to do the following

- ✔ 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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