Dairy Every Day is a Healthy Way

Dairy foods help healthy brains, bones and bodies grow.

Plant-based milks – aside from fortified soy milk - don't match the nutrition in dairy milk.

All aboard for healthy eating!

Brain Health
Dairy provides 7 of 14 key nutrients for early brain development

Strong Bones
Dairy provides more bone-building nutrients than any other food group

Immune Health
Dairy provides important nutrients for immune health

Growth
Dairy provides key nutrients that fuel growth and development

6–12 months
Introduce yogurt and cheese

1–2 years
Aim for 1⅔–2 cups a day

2–3 years
Aim for 2–2½ cups a day

4–8 years
Aim for 2½ cups a day

9+ years
Aim for 3 cups a day

What counts as a cup* of dairy?

*Can be divided into several servings throughout the day.

Milk
• 1 cup/8 ounces

Yogurt
• 1 cup/8 ounces (no added sugar)

Cheese
• 1½ ounces of hard cheese
• ⅓ cup shredded cheese
• 1 ounce American cheese

Make Every Bite & Sip Count

Pairing dairy foods — milk, cheese and yogurt — with other healthy foods like fruits, veggies and whole grains can help build good eating habits and help children grow and thrive.

Quick tips to help your child build healthy habits

6-12 months

- Cottage cheese
- Pureed fruit
- Chopped cooked veggies
- Shredded cheese

After 12 months

- Milk with meals
- Yogurt dip
- Pepper strips
- Whole grain tortillas
- Cheese
- Smashed black beans

Both affordable and practical, you can find milk, cheese and yogurt in several textures and varieties, including lactose-free. Chances are there is something even picky eaters will like.

Tummy troubles?

There are lactose-free options for tiny tummies

- Lactose-free dairy milk is real dairy milk just without the lactose.
- Yogurt with probiotics can help break down lactose, making it easier to digest.
- Hard cheeses (e.g., Cheddar, Swiss, Colby, etc.) contain very little lactose.

What Milk When?

0–6 months
Breast milk or infant formula only.

6–12 months
Breast milk or infant formula with baby's first bites.

At around 6 months introduce tastes and textures of nutrient-rich foods like yogurt and cheese, eggs, iron-fortified cereal, ground beef and pureed fruits and vegetables to help baby learn to like a variety of healthy foods.

12 months
After baby's first birthday, it is time to add whole dairy milk to fuel brain and growth spurts. Breastfeeding can continue after 1 year if desired.

Children under 5 should avoid plant-based/non-dairy milks,* caffeinated beverages, sugar and low-calorie sweetened beverages, toddler formula and flavored dairy milk.

*In case of a milk protein allergy; fortified soymilk is the recommendation.

2–5 years
Switch from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk. Think milk at meals and water in between.

Learn more:

Note: Individuals are encouraged to obtain personalized health and medical advice from their pediatrician.

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