

DAIRY EVERY DAY IS A HEALTHY WAY

Frequently Asked Questions



What are the healthiest beverages for my baby or young child?

Research shows what children drink from birth until age five makes a difference for their health, both now and in the future. Health experts - including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and American Association of Pediatric Dentistry - agree that dairy milk and water should be the go-to beverages for children ages 1-5 years. One tip is to encourage young children to drink dairy milk with meals and water in between.



What about plant-based, non-dairy milks and other beverages?

Children under 5 should avoid plant-based/non-dairy milks,* caffeinated beverages, sugar and low-calorie sweetened beverages, toddler formula and flavored dairy milk and, 100% fruit juice is an option in limited amounts but is not a daily recommendation.

Restricting sugar-sweetened beverages in early childhood is recommended due to associations with lower diet quality and other adverse health outcomes.

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

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When should my baby begin drinking milk?

Here are the recommendations for children 0–5



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.



2–5 years

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

HOW MUCH DAIRY



6–12 months

Introduce yogurt and cheese



1–2 years

Aim for 1 2/3–2 cups a day



2–3 years

Aim for 2 cups a day



4–8 years

Aim for 2 1/2 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

- 1 1/2 ounces of hard cheese
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- 1 ounce American cheese

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What are substitutions for dairy if my child is lactose intolerant?

While some may avoid dairy for tummy troubles, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping dairy products on the menu for most children with lactose intolerance. Many options exist for lactose intolerance. Products like lactose-free dairy milk and lactose-free yogurt have no lactose, hard cheeses naturally contain very little lactose and yogurt has good bacteria that helps break down lactose.



What are lactose-free options for my child?

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

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Science Summary
Lactose Intolerance

Overview

Dairy foods such as milk, yogurt and cheese are an integral part of healthy eating patterns for children (1). Dairy foods are a source of calcium, protein, and other nutrients that are important for children's health. Lactose intolerance (LI) is a condition in which the body is unable to digest lactose, a sugar found in dairy foods. LI is a common condition that affects many people, particularly those of Asian, African, and Hispanic descent. LI is a lifelong condition that does not affect a person's overall health. However, it can cause discomfort and digestive issues if not managed properly. Dairy foods are a source of calcium, protein, and other nutrients that are important for children's health. Lactose intolerance (LI) is a condition in which the body is unable to digest lactose, a sugar found in dairy foods. LI is a common condition that affects many people, particularly those of Asian, African, and Hispanic descent. LI is a lifelong condition that does not affect a person's overall health. However, it can cause discomfort and digestive issues if not managed properly.

Dairy foods make important nutrient contributions to the eating patterns of the general U.S. population. The goal of the NDC is to enable individuals throughout the lifespan to have healthy, enjoyable meals and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Dairy foods are an important and affordable food group within healthy eating patterns, providing a significant source of calcium, protein, and other nutrients. Dairy foods are a source of calcium, protein, and other nutrients that are important for children's health. Lactose intolerance (LI) is a condition in which the body is unable to digest lactose, a sugar found in dairy foods. LI is a common condition that affects many people, particularly those of Asian, African, and Hispanic descent. LI is a lifelong condition that does not affect a person's overall health. However, it can cause discomfort and digestive issues if not managed properly.

Understanding the difference between lactose non-persistence and lactose intolerance. Given the importance of dairy foods for meeting the nutrient needs of Americans, it is important to consider potential barriers to dairy food consumption, such as lactose intolerance (LI). LI is characterized by a variety of symptoms, including abdominal discomfort, bloating, gas, and diarrhea, which typically occur within 30 minutes to 2 hours after consuming dairy products. LI is a common condition that affects many people, particularly those of Asian, African, and Hispanic descent. LI is a lifelong condition that does not affect a person's overall health. However, it can cause discomfort and digestive issues if not managed properly.

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Are there any solutions to help my child accept/learn to like new foods?

Eat family meals

There are many benefits when families eat together, and infants rely heavily on modeling food behaviors of others.

Be patient

It can take more than 10 times before an infant accepts a new food flavor or texture.

Start small

Just one bite is a great start to increasing exposure and familiarity of new foods.

Encourage exploration

Making a mess is part of the learning process.

Trust their gut

Toddlers know when they are full, so don't worry about them cleaning their plate — this will distort their innate hunger and fullness cues.

Multiple meals and snacks

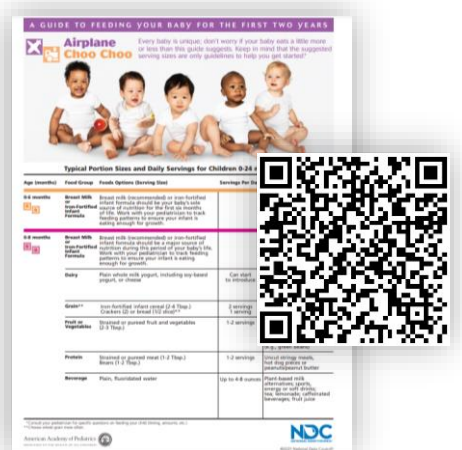
Aim for 3 meals and 2–3 snacks that are 2–3 hours before a meal.

Add dairy foods

They are versatile in flavor and texture and can help enhance consumption of other food groups, acting as a delivery system to help growing children, even picky eaters, eat better.

- Beginning at 6 months introduce unsweetened plain yogurt and cheese. Serve plain, unsweetened regular or Greek/Icelandic yogurt with pureed fruits to introduce a variety of tastes and textures at once, like a tart taste balanced with something naturally sweeter like fruit.
- Cottage cheese adds a new texture that can be served with fruit or unsweetened apple sauce as well as with veggies or cooked pasta.
- Melt cheese and top cooked broccoli, cauliflower or carrots and mash or finely chop into bite-sized portions.

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Do I need to delay introducing new foods because I think my child has food allergies?

It's understandable to be concerned about the development of food allergies. But the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans state there is no evidence to support the prevention of food allergies by delaying the introduction of allergenic foods beyond when other complementary foods are given.

In fact, the opposite might be true. The introduction of potentially allergenic foods during the complementary feeding period is supported by research, pediatrician recommendations and child readiness and may be helpful in reducing the risk of food allergy. In case of a milk allergy; fortified soymilk is the recommendation.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DAIRY FOODS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFESPAN HERE



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