

Flavored Milk: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Flavored milk is packed with nutrients that make it nutritionally superior to soft drinks and fruit drinks. Following are some frequently asked questions about flavored milk, along with answers that can help you guide students, parents and teachers.

What is flavored milk?

Flavored milk is simply plain cow's milk, with a little added flavoring and sweetener. It's available in chocolate, strawberry, banana and root beer flavors from whole to fat-free varieties.

How nutritious is flavored milk?

Like all milk, flavored milk is a rich source of calcium, protein, vitamin D, vitamin A, vitamin B12, phosphorus, riboflavin, potassium and niacin. Milk's nutrients, especially calcium, are necessary for developing strong bones and teeth. Each 8-ounce serving of milk—white or flavored—provides 300 mg of calcium, about one-third to one-fourth of the daily calcium requirement for children.

Do the sweeteners in milk cause hyperactivity?

No. Flavored milks contain less table sugar per 8-ounce serving than cola drinks. According to scientific research, sugar does not cause hyperactivity or mood swings in children.

Do the sweeteners in milk cause tooth decay?

No. Because flavored milk is a beverage, it is less likely to cause cavities than sticky foods. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry agrees that chocolate milk is a healthy beverage and, in fact, the calcium, phosphorus and cocoa in chocolate milk actually may protect teeth from decay.

Does chocolate in milk affect calcium absorption?

No. Chocolate milk contains a small amount of oxalic acid, a compound found in cocoa beans and other plants. The very small amount of this compound in chocolate milk has no significant affect on the availability of milk's calcium.

How much caffeine is in chocolate milk?

Each cup of chocolate milk has about 2 to 7 mg of caffeine, the same amount that's found in one cup of decaffeinated coffee. This tiny amount of caffeine in chocolate milk is too small to affect most children. Colas, on the other hand, may contain up to 10 times more caffeine than chocolate milk.

Do children and young adults choose flavored milk?

Yes. Flavored milk is a favorite with kids because it tastes great and is "kid cool." When offered at school, chocolate milk is the most popular choice of milk. A study showed that milk consumption increased at school when chocolate milk was offered.

Can you drink chocolate milk if you are lactose intolerant?

Chocolate milk may be more easily digested than unflavored milk in people with lactose intolerance. In fact, most individuals with a limited ability to break down lactose can drink two cups of any type of milk a day when consumed in small servings or with other foods.

How does flavored milk fit into the school nutrition programs?

Perfectly. School lunches are designed to provide about one-third of the nutrients children need each day. Milk, flavored or plain, is a required part of the menu at breakfast, lunch and other after-school and summer food programs. Because of its kid appeal, offering flavored milk means kids get more calcium, riboflavin and phosphorus with school meals.