



# Dairy in School Wellness Policies

School Wellness policies that use a balanced approach, both evaluate foods based on their overall nutritional quality and help make healthier options more appealing. Policies that give students easy access to dairy products will help them get essential nutrients needed for growth and development.

**The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommends increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products. These foods can be good sources of the “nutrients of concern,” which are low in Americans’ diets. According to the DGA, children’s diets are low in calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium and vitamin E.**

- DGA recommends 3 daily servings of low-fat or fat-free milk or equivalent milk products as part of a healthy diet.
- Dairy foods supply three of these five nutrients of concern for children: calcium, potassium, magnesium.<sup>1</sup>

#### Tips to Help Schools Increase Dairy Consumption:

- Adopt the New Look of School Milk– Kids drink more milk when schools offer it in plastic, re-sealable containers in different sizes, various flavors, merchandising locations (vending or a la carte) and ice cold refrigeration.<sup>2</sup>
  - Milk sales increased 18%, and lunch participation increased 5%.
- Milk, flavored milk, yogurt, and yogurt drinks taste great and are nutrient-packed alternatives to typical vending machine options. Natural cheeses, like mozzarella string cheese, are a portable and nutritious choice.

#### Offer Milk in Flavors Kids Love:

- Peer-reviewed studies show that kids who consume **flavored milk** do **not** have higher intakes of total dietary sugar or fat, compared to kids who don’t consume flavored milk, but flavored milk drinkers **do** have higher intakes of calcium.<sup>3</sup>
  - In a survey among 4,000, 3-A-Day of Dairy moms, 92% said they are comfortable with their child drinking flavored milk at school.
- According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, small amounts of sugars added to nutrient dense foods, such as reduced-fat milk products, may increase a person’s intake of such foods by **enhancing palatability** of these products, thus improving nutrient intake without contributing excessive calories.<sup>4</sup>

#### Dairy is an affordable, nutrient-packed wellness solution.

- Milk provides more calcium and protein per penny compared to any other foods served on school lunch menus.<sup>5</sup>

## Facts About Dairy Nutrition

### Kids need more dairy in their diet

- Seventy-seven percent of children ages 9-19 do not meet their recommended dairy intake.<sup>6</sup>
- Bone mass built during childhood and adolescence helps determine lifetime risk of fractures and osteoporosis later in life.<sup>7</sup>

### Milk, cheese and yogurt are among the most nutritious choices at school

- Calcium helps build and maintain strong bones and teeth.
- Vitamin D helps promote the absorption of calcium.
- Protein builds and repairs muscle tissue.
- Potassium regulates the body’s fluid balance and helps maintain normal blood pressure and muscle activity.
- Magnesium helps support normal heart function and blood pressure, and development and maintenance of strong bones.

### Research supports dairy’s role in school wellness

- A 2006 American Academy of Pediatrics report - *Lactose Intolerance in Infants, Children and Adolescents* - recommends children with lactose intolerance still consume some dairy foods in order to get enough calcium, vitamin D, protein and other nutrients essential for bone health and overall growth.<sup>8</sup>
- The U.S. Surgeon General’s Report on *Bone Health and Osteoporosis* recognizes the role of nutrients in dairy foods, including calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, protein, and vitamin D, that work together to help protect bones.

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<sup>1</sup> Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 (6th edition). [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).

<sup>2</sup> National Dairy Council and American School Food Service Association. The School Milk Pilot Test. Beverage Marketing Corporation for NDC and ASFSA, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, et al. The nutritional consequences of flavored milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2002; 102(6):853-856.

<sup>4</sup> Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 (6th edition). [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).

<sup>5</sup> Shanklin CW & Wie S. Nutrient contributions per 100 kcal and per penny for the 5 meal components in school lunch: Entrée, milk, vegetable/fruit, bread/grain, and miscellaneous. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2001; 101(11): 1358-1361.

<sup>6</sup> National Dairy Council, unpublished data based on the National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES), 1999-2002.

<sup>7</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report from the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: US DHHS, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, Optimizing bone health and calcium intakes of infants, children, and adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2006; 117 (2):578-585