

Grade Schoolers 5-12 Years



Building Healthy Habits to Last a Lifetime



Elementary school years are filled with activity. To keep pace with packed schedules, fuel learning and play, build bone mass and support unique developmental needs, high-quality nutrition – like the nutrients provided by dairy foods – is especially important at this life stage. However, dairy consumption starts to slip below recommended levels throughout the elementary school years, with the gap widening as they become more independent.¹ This means school-aged children are at risk of under consuming three key nutrients that dairy foods can provide: potassium, calcium and vitamin D.



Dairy's Unique Contributions



Milk's calcium, vitamin D, protein and phosphorus help support bone mass, which may reduce risk for osteoporosis later in life. Osteoporosis may seem a long way off for kids, but building bone density early in life is vitally important.²



Dairy foods like milk also provide essential nutrients that support the immune system, including high-quality protein, vitamins A, D and B12, zinc and selenium.³



Did You Know?



School meals are healthy and can go a long way in helping make every bite and sip count and ensure well-rounded and nutrient-rich meals are within reach.⁴

Special Considerations



Drinking milk helps kids get their recommended servings of dairy. Whether plain or flavored, milk is a nutritious and delicious option that helps deliver important nutrients to growing children and teens.⁵ Plus, flavored milk is low in added sugars compared to sugar-sweetened beverages, contributing about 4% of the added sugar in kids' diets.⁶

Recommended Daily Dairy Servings⁷⁻⁹



2.5 - 3 servings

See backside for what counts as a serving of dairy. There are a variety of ways to enjoy milk, cheese and yogurt to meet the recommended daily servings.





Try this Recipe



Berry Dairy Delicious Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 2 cups frozen strawberries
- ½ cup frozen cauliflower
- 1 ½ cup milk
- ½ cup yogurt (plain or vanilla)
- 2 tbsp honey (optional)
- Fresh strawberries (optional)

Instructions:

- Place all ingredients into a blender and puree until smooth.
- Pour smoothie into a glass and top with strawberries.

What Counts as a Serving of Dairy?

	Milk: 1 cup
	Lactose-free Milk: 1 cup
	Yogurt: ¾ cup
	Kefir: 1 cup
	American Cheese: 1 oz
	Shredded Cheese: ¼ cup
	Hard Cheese: 1 oz
	Ricotta Cheese: ¼ cup
	Cottage Cheese: ½ cup
	Fortified Dairy Alternatives: 1 cup

Serving sizes are based on the *Daily Servings by Calorie Level* supplement to the 2025-2030 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed* as defined by the Food and Drug Administration.



Make Every Bite & Sip Count



It's ok to have fun with food. Decorating a smoothie bowl is one way to bring excitement to mealtimes. Let kids add their favorite smoothie ingredients like milk, yogurt and berries then give it a whirl, pour into a bowl and decorate with fruit, whole grain cereal, nuts or seeds.



Kids love to dip. Serving a dip alongside veggies encourages kids to try them. Try blending your favorite herbs and spices with Greek yogurt or cottage cheese for an easy kid-friendly dip.



Teach kids where their food comes from. The more involved a child is in growing and preparing foods, the more likely they are to be engaged around food and try something new. Let kids tend to their own herb pots, take them on a field trip to a local dairy farm or ask them to pick out produce at the farmers market.

Sources

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Milk, yogurt and cheese are nutrient-dense foods that can help nourish people throughout life. Dairy foods, including lactose-free varieties, are nutritious and accessible options that can help fill nutrient gaps and contribute to healthy eating patterns. To learn more about how dairy foods help people thrive across the lifespan, visit USDAiry.com.

