

October 2011

## The Story Behind Your Child's Milk Choices

### 1. Calcium Needs for Children and Teens

Children need calcium to help grow and develop their bones and teeth. Dairy foods are the most common source of calcium for Americans. The USDA reports that 70% of teenage boys and 90% of teenage girls do not get enough calcium. How much calcium does your child get daily? To help meet calcium needs, the USDA makes the following recommendations for dairy consumption:

Children Ages 2-3	2 cups fluid milk per day
Children Ages 3-8	2.5 cups fluid milk per day
Children Ages 9-18	3 cups fluid milk per day

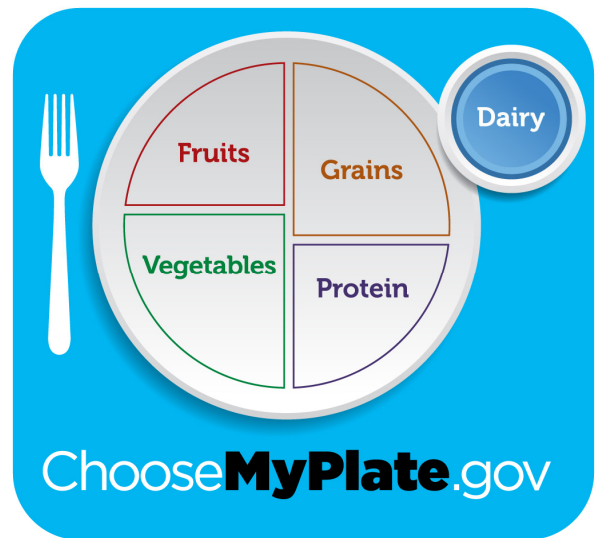
(ADA, 2002 and USDA, 2011)

### 2. USDA Milk Regulations for Schools

As a means of helping Americans achieve health, the USDA publishes the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The 2010 guidelines recommend that Americans decrease their intake of both total fat and saturated fat. Therefore, the USDA requires that Federally-supported school breakfast, lunch and snacks provide two varieties of fat-free and/or low-fat milk. To meet this new requirement, MCFI has chosen to provide students with skim white and skim chocolate milk. (USDA and HHS, 2010)

### 3. The Chocolate Milk Debate

Most children prefer whole milk, and with the new USDA requirements to provide two varieties of fat-free and/or low-fat milk, there has been some concern that children will stop drinking milk at school. To help promote milk consumption among students, MCFI has chosen to provide skim chocolate milk as an option at breakfast, lunch and snacks. While chocolate milk does have sugar, it also has protein, calcium, vitamin D and potassium—all of which are necessary for proper growth and development. Other beverages, such as juice and soda, do not contain the nutrients that chocolate milk contains. (USDA, 2011)



### 4. What if My Child Won't Drink Skim Milk?

It may take your child a little time to get used to skim milk. Since taste preferences are learned, children need continued exposure to the taste and texture of skim milk. If you prefer your child to drink skim white milk, provide this at home so your child is familiar with it. If your child prefers chocolate milk, provide it in the skim variety at home, so your child does not expect whole chocolate milk. If your child does not drink milk in general, make sure they are getting all the calcium they need from other foods such as yogurt, cheese, fortified cereals, almonds or greens. For additional information about calcium and calcium-containing foods, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). (USDA, 2011)

## Additional Resources

- ◆ [www.DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://www.DietaryGuidelines.gov)
- ◆ [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)



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