

September 2011

## New Requirements for Fluid Milk

### New Regulations

In an effort to better align the current school meal pattern requirements with the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the USDA has recently updated the milk regulations for school meals. Schools participating in Federal Meal Programs are now required to serve two different varieties of fat-free or low-fat milk at each breakfast, lunch and snack. All children over the age of two who participate in a CACFP program will now be offered low-fat or fat-free milk with each breakfast, lunch and snack.

### The Key Issues

Many children, particularly those in the age range of 9-13 are not consuming the recommended amount of calcium each day. Every cell in the body, even your muscles, use calcium to function properly. If an individual is not getting enough calcium from the foods that they eat, it will take it from the largest storehouse of calcium in the body: the bones. This can make your bones weak and eventually lead to a disease called osteoporosis.

### Developing Lifelong Habits

It is especially important that children establish the habit of drinking low-fat and fat free milk at a young age. Children who drink milk on a regular basis often grow to be adults who do the same. Taste for certain types of milk, for example a preference for 2% milk or whole milk, is a learned habit that can be changed.



### Nutrition Comparison

By choosing low-fat or fat free milk and milk products, you are reducing or eliminating the saturated fats and cholesterol found in higher fat milks. Low-fat and fat free milk provide the same key nutrients like protein, vitamin D and calcium as the higher fat varieties. Low-fat and fat free milk also have less calories which can assist in achieving or maintaining a healthy weight throughout an individual's life time.



## Additional Resources

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