



New Look  
of  
School Milk

# Milk's Role in Nutrition Parent Fact Sheet

The National Dairy Council® conducted a national survey to find out what moms really think about their kids' nutrition and how schools can "make the grade" by offering a variety of nutritious food and beverage choices.<sup>1</sup>

## Kids are in a calcium crisis — moms think they should be getting more milk

- To get the nutrients they need, it is important that children are encouraged to drink more milk not only at home, but also at school.<sup>2</sup>
- Seventy-one percent of moms think their kids should consume at least three servings of low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products each day, yet 61 percent say they think their kids actually consume less than three servings, which is the recommended amount according to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for children ages 9 and older.

## Parents and schools play a key role in kids' eating habits

- Although almost all moms (97 percent) think parents have the most responsibility for teaching their children about good nutrition habits, half of them believe this role is also the responsibility of school professionals.
- Almost all moms (97 percent) think it's important that their child's school offers healthy food options as part of school breakfast and/or school lunch.
- If given a choice from among a variety of beverages offered by their child's school, more moms say they would prefer their child select low-fat or fat-free white milk (34%) than 100-percent fruit juice (18%), sports drinks (2%) or soda (1%).

## Flavor might help kids drink milk

- Research shows that children who consume flavored milk do not have higher intakes of added sugars or total fat than children who do not consume flavored milk, but flavored milk drinkers do have higher intakes of calcium.<sup>3</sup>
- More than eight in ten moms (84 percent) say their children would be very or somewhat likely to drink milk if it were offered in a variety of low-fat flavors such as chocolate and strawberry.
- Ninety-two percent of moms agree that offering low-fat flavored milk in school cafeterias is a good idea.
  - Each serving of low-fat flavored milk provides the same nine essential nutrients as low-fat white milk.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Dairy Council survey conducted online by Harris Interactive between September 6-13, 2007 among 1,020 mothers ages 18+ with at least one child age 5-17. Theoretical sampling error estimates cannot be calculated. A full methodology is available.

<sup>2</sup> Nicklas, T.A. J. Am. Coll. Nutr. 22: 340, 2003.

<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> U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Supply Database. Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply, 1999.



## Offering milk in cool, kid-friendly packaging is important to many moms

- About three in five moms (62 percent) say that packaging plays an important role when their children choose beverages at school.
- Recycling plastic milk containers or paper milk cartons by their children's school is important to 87 percent of moms.
- Three in four moms (75 percent) are likely to pay an extra 5-10 cents per container for their children's school to offer healthy beverage choices such as milk or water in appealing packaging if this packaging leads their child to choose a healthy beverage rather than a less nutritious beverage.

### Moms can take action

- Ask the school nutrition director or principal if milk is offered in plastic bottles, in a variety of low-fat flavors, served cold and made available on the school menu or in the vending machines.<sup>5</sup>
- Send a letter to the school about the importance of offering students new milk options.<sup>5</sup>
- Learn more about the school district's nutrition wellness policy to make sure dairy foods are included.<sup>5</sup>
- Attend school board and PTA meetings to discuss why nutritious and healthy options on the school menu are important.<sup>5</sup>

### Nutrition fuels students

- Moms name the following health benefits resulting from their children consuming the recommended three daily servings of milk a day:
  - Strong bones and teeth (96 percent)
  - Reduce the risk of bone fractures (82 percent)
- The majority of moms (97 percent) agree that nutrition impacts children's academic performance and overall success in school.
- Educators and health professionals agree that nutritious choices help fuel academic performance.<sup>7</sup>



According to the 2002 School Milk Pilot Test, school milk consumption increased 37 percent by providing milk in plastic packaging, offering one or more additional flavors, and ensuring better refrigeration and merchandising.<sup>6</sup> To help kids drink more milk at school and get the essential nutrients their growing bodies need each day, the National Dairy Council® encourages moms to support the "New Look of School Milk," a program that makes low-fat white and flavored milk accessible to kids in cool, convenient, kid-friendly plastic packaging at school.

Visit  
[NutritionExplorations.org](http://NutritionExplorations.org)

for more information  
and to find your  
local Dairy Council  
representative.

<sup>5</sup> Nutrition Explorations. Parents Help Your Kids Choose Milk at School. <http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/flavored.asp>.

<sup>6</sup> National Dairy Council and American School Food Service Association. The School Milk Pilot Test. Beverage Marketing Corporation for NDC and ASFSA, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Action for Healthy Kids. The Role of Sound Nutrition and Physical Activity in Academic Achievement. [http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/facts\\_and\\_findings/fs\\_npaa.pdf](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/facts_and_findings/fs_npaa.pdf)

