

Milk & Milk Substitutes

Overview

Fluid milk is an important and required piece of the CACFP meal pattern. It provides nutrients for health and development, including calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Consuming milk can be important in promoting bone health for children and adults.

IMPORTANT! All milk served must be pasteurized and meet State standards. Raw (unpasteurized) milk is prohibited in CACFP programs.

Life Stages

Life Stage	Type of Milk	When
Infants	Breastmilk and/or Iron-Fortified Formula	Every Meal & Snack
12-23 months	Unflavored Whole Milk	Breakfast, Lunch, & Supper. Option at Snack.
24-25 months	Unflavored Non-Fat, 1% or 2% Milk	
2-5 years	Unflavored Non-Fat or 1% Milk	
6-18 + Adults*	Unflavored/Flavored Non-Fat or 1% Milk	

Optional for adults at supper!

*For adult participants, yogurt may replace milk 1x/day when not served as a meat alternate in the same meal.

Nutrition Requirements for Milk Substitutions

Nutrient	Per Cup (8 fl oz)
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE)
Vitamin D	2.5 mcg
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	0.44 mg
Vitamin B12	1.1 mcg

Quick Tip! Check the protein content first. If a product has less than 8 grams of protein per cup, it does not meet USDA requirements and cannot be served for CACFP reimbursement.

Milk substitutes must meet ALL the above standards per cup.



Different Creditable Milk Types

In addition to regular cow's milk, these other milk types are creditable. Milk must meet age-specific fat content and flavor requirements. These additional milk types maintain recommended nutritional recommendations.

Acidophilus
Cultured milk with probiotic bacteria.

Lactose Free
USDA recommends first choice for lactose intolerance.

Goat Milk
Better tolerated/easily digestible compared to cow's milk.

Fluid Milk Substitutions (Non-Dairy Alternatives)

Soymilk

Only certain products will meet nutritional requirements.

Rice, Oat, Hemp, Almond, Cashew, etc.

Do NOT meet requirements.



IMPORTANT: Fluid milk substitutes must be **nutritionally equivalent** to cow's milk. They must meet specific USDA nutrition standards for calcium, protein, vitamins A and D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B12.

Compliance and Requirements

NOT Acceptable as Milk

Water, juice, nutritional beverages, powdered milk beverages. Must have Medical Statement on file.

Flavored Milk Rules

Ages 0-5: Not allowed
Ages 6+: Allowed in 1% or non-fat

Reimbursement for Substitutes

Medical Statement or Meal Preference Request must be on file for substitutes.
Refer to the **CACFP Policy and Procedure Manual** for more information.

Quick Reference Guide

Situation	Suggested Steps
Child is lactose intolerant	Serve lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk. NO documentation required.
Parent requests soymilk for vegan diet	Get completed Meal Preference Request from parents identifying reason. Verify soymilk are nutritionally equivalent.
Parents request almond milk	Currently, almond milk does NOT meet USDA requirements, requires Medical Statement for meals to be reimbursable.
Child has severe dairy and soy allergy	Request Medical Statement and follow the accommodation plan on the Statement.
3-year-old child wants chocolate milk	NOT creditable. Flavored milk only for ages 6+. Notify parents.

Resources

[Oregon Department of Education : Child Nutrition Program Meal Accommodations and Modifications](#)

[CACFP Policy and Procedure Manual](#)

[Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks | Food and Nutrition Service](#)