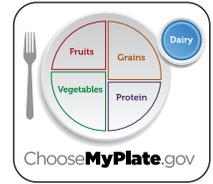


DAIRY LESSON



Dear Parent,

Your child attended a Food, Fun, & Reading lesson today. Food, Fun, & Reading gets children excited about trying nutritious foods through reading and fun activities. Each lesson focuses on a different USDA MyPlate food group. Today, your child learned about the Dairy group. Please see the attached handouts for more information including MyPlate tips for parents, a kid's activity sheet, and kid-friendly recipes to try at home.

The Dairy group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, and calcium-fortified soymilk. Dairy foods provide a number of nutrients including protein, potassium, calcium, and vitamin D. Calcium and vitamin D are particularly important for young children. These nutrients help strengthen their bones as they grow. Children ages 2-3 years need 2 cup equivalents of dairy per day and children ages 4-8 years need 2 ½ cup equivalents. To find out what counts as a cup equivalent, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

USDA's MyPlate recommends choosing low-fat or fat-free dairy products, which contain the same vitamins, minerals, and protein as higher fat dairy, but have less fat and saturated fat. Here are some tips for offering nutritious choices from the Dairy group to your child.

- Make a yogurt parfait. Choose low-fat or fat-free yogurt and top it with fruit and granola or whole grain cereal.
- Serve a yogurt dip with sliced fruit, berries, or graham crackers. Try plain, non-fat or low-fat yogurt with a small amount of honey and cinnamon mixed in.
- Top a baked potato, broccoli, or bean soup with reduced-fat, shredded cheese.
- Choose plain, unflavored milk over flavored milks (i.e., chocolate), which have added sugars.

For children who are reluctant to drink milk, finding creative ways to add dairy to foods and/or ways to incorporate other non-dairy sources of calcium into their meals and snacks may be helpful.

- Make oatmeal with milk. Add some chopped almonds on top for extra calcium.
- Blend milk or yogurt into a fruit smoothie. Or, serve tomato soup or pudding made with milk.
- Serve calcium-fortified soymilk or nut milks (i.e., almond or cashew milk) in cold or hot cereal.
- Incorporate dark green leafy vegetables such as kale or bok choy into meals and snacks. Try bok choy in a stir-fry or blend kale into a smoothie.
- Try calcium-fortified tofu. Silken tofu (soft tofu) can be blended into a fruit smoothie. Firm tofu can be baked and added to a stir-fry or pasta dish in the place of other protein.

**When buying non-dairy milk, check the nutrition label to see if it is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Some brands do not have added nutrients. Similarly, check the nutrition label to see if tofu is processed with calcium.*

Sincerely,

The Food \$ense Team

REFERENCES

Johnson, A., & Ansel, K. (2017, November 10). Dairy alternatives for kids who won't – or can't – drink milk. Retrieved from <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/dietary-guidelines-and-myplate/dairy-alternatives-for-kids-who-wont-or-cant-drink-milk>

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). (2017, November 3). All about the Dairy group. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/dairy>