

STUDY SHOWS CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM DRINKING FLAVORED MILK

A study released in the April 2008 Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that children who drink flavored or plain milk consume more nutrients and have a lower or comparable body mass index (BMI – a measure of body fatness) than children who don't drink milk.¹

“Milk contains many nutrients that are important for children. We learned in our research that children who drink milk, including plain and flavored milk, have higher intakes of many nutrients that are low in children's diets, and comparable or lower BMIs compared to children who don't drink milk,” said Mary Murphy, MS, RD, co-author of the study. “Limiting access to flavored milks in schools and elsewhere may have the undesirable effect of further reducing intakes of many essential nutrients provided by milk.”



The study compared nutrient intakes and BMIs among 7,557 U.S. children and adolescents ages 2-18 years drinking flavored milk (with or without plain milk), exclusively plain milk and no milk. All comparisons were adjusted for the amount of calories reported as well as age allowing for differences to be examined based on equal consumption of calories and age distributions. Results showed milk drinkers (flavored and plain) had significantly higher intakes of vitamin A, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium than non-milk drinkers. In addition, BMI measures of milk drinkers were comparable to or lower than measures of non-milk drinkers. Intake of added sugars did not differ between flavored milk drinkers and non-milk drinkers. Among females 12-18 years of age, average calcium intakes by flavored milk drinkers and exclusively plain milk drinkers were nearly double the calcium intakes of non-milk drinkers.

Rachel Johnson, PhD, MPH, RD, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Professor of Nutrition at the University of Vermont, a co-author of the study noted, “Intakes of added sugars were comparable between flavored milk drinkers and non-milk drinkers confirming that the inclusion of flavored milk in the diet does not lead to significantly higher added sugar intakes by children and adolescents.”

¹ Murphy MM, Douglas JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in U.S. children and adolescents. J Am Diet Assoc. 2008; 108:631-639.

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