

Preschoolers 2-5 Years

Nourishing Growing Kids






Leading health experts agree water and plain milk are the only recommended beverages for children 1 to 5 years of age. Plant-based alternatives are not recommended due to their wide variability in nutrient content, limited evidence of bioavailability and impact on diet quality and health outcomes. The exception would be unsweetened, fortified soy milk if a child is allergic to dairy milk or is in a family that has made specific dietary choices such as abstaining from animal products.¹




Dairy's Unique Contributions

Dairy foods like low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese are fundamental to good nutrition.

Milk, in particular, provides a powerful package of 13 essential nutrients.

-  Calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D help build and maintain strong bones and teeth.
-  The high-quality protein found in dairy foods helps build and repair muscles.
-  The package of B vitamins helps convert food to fuel.

Special Considerations

-  It is important for adults to role model healthy eating behaviors for children. One easy way to help kids build healthy habits is to serve nutrient-rich milk at meals and water in between for hydration.

Recommended Daily Dairy Servings^{2,3}

-  **2-3 years old**
 **2 cups**

- 4-5 years old**
 **2½ cups**

See backside for what counts as a serving of dairy. There are a variety of ways to enjoy milk, cheese and yogurt to meet the recommended daily servings.





Try this Recipe



Fruit & Yogurt Ice Pops

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 cups frozen raspberries, blueberries and/or strawberries
- 3 cups fat free yogurt

Instructions:

- Place ½ cup of fruit in paper cup.
- Place ½ cup yogurt into cups of fruit.
- Stir each cup with spoon or wooden stick and place in center of cup.
- Freeze until firm.



Make Every Bite & Sip Count



Caregivers and littles can enjoy a bowl of oatmeal with milk or build their own fruit, whole grain cereal and yogurt parfaits together in the mornings. It's a nutritious start to the day and can help jumpstart healthy habits to last a lifetime.



Let preschoolers lend a hand with meal prep. This can help little ones have a say in mealtime, feel more comfortable trying new foods and make healthy eating fun. Make whole grain pita pizzas together by decorating with tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese and colorful veggies or cool off after a day of play with fruit & yogurt ice pops.

Sources

- ¹ Lott M, Callahan E, Welker Duffy E, et al. Healthy beverage consumption in early childhood: Recommendations from key national health and nutrition organizations. *Healthy Eating Research*. September 2019. Accessed at <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/research/consensus-statement-healthy-beverage-consumption-in-early-childhood-recommendations-from-key-national-health-and-nutrition-organizations/>.
- ² U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. Accessed at https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf.
- ³ U.S. Department of Agriculture. MyPlate. What foods are included in the Dairy Group? 2020. Accessed at <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/dairy>.



Milk, yogurt and cheese are foundational foods that help nourish people throughout life. Dairy foods, including lactose-free varieties, are highly nutritious and accessible options that help fill nutrient gaps and contribute to healthy eating patterns. To learn more about how dairy foods help people thrive across the lifespan, visit USDairy.com.

