

## MyPyramid: Milk and Milk Products Group

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MyPyramid – the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guide system – is an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts based on sex, age and activity level. Look for this personalized guide at [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov).



For healthful diets, stay within your calorie limit while getting needed nutrients from each of the basic food groups. Learn to balance food intake and physical activity to maintain a healthy weight.

equivalent for ages 2 to 8 and three cups for ages 9 and over. All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are part of this food group. Foods from milk with a low calcium content like cream cheese, butter and cream are not included in this group. The table below gives information about milk products that are part of the group and the amounts that count as one cup.

### Nutrients from Milk and Milk Products

Milk and milk products provide nutrients needed for bone health and other uses. These nutrients include calcium, vitamin D and protein. Milk products also can contain fats that should sometimes be avoided because the extra calories are not needed. Choosing low-fat and fat-free dairy foods provide a healthy option.



MyPyramid recommendations for the **Milk Group** include a daily intake of two cups of milk or its

<i>Types of Milk Products</i>	<i>Amount of Milk Products That Counts As A Cup</i>	<i>Common Portions</i>
Milk	1 cup 1 half-pint container 1/2 cup evaporated milk	
Yogurt	1 cup 1 snack size (4 oz.) = 1/2 cup milk	1 small container (6 oz.) = 3/4 cup milk
Cheese	1 1/2 oz. hard cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss and parmesan) 1/3 cup shredded cheese 2 oz. processed cheese 1/2 cup ricotta cheese 2 cups cottage cheese	1 small container (6 oz) = 3/4 cup milk 1 slice processed cheese = 1/3 cup milk 1/2 cup cottage cheese = 1/4 cup milk
Milk Based Desserts	1 cup pudding made with milk 1 cup frozen yogurt 1 1/2 cups ice cream	1 scoop ice cream = 1/3 cup milk

## **Bone Health and Calcium**

Diets rich in milk and milk products help build and maintain a person's bone mass through his or her life cycle and reduces the risk of osteoporosis (a bone weakening disease). In fact, milk products are the main source of calcium in American diets. Getting the recommended amount of milk is especially important to bone health during childhood and through the teen years when most bone mass is being built.

## **Lactose Intolerance**

Some people have difficulty digesting lactose (the sugar found in milk) and may experience nausea, bloating, cramping and runny stools. Their bodies don't produce enough of an enzyme to break down lactose so that it can be absorbed. These people can sometimes handle small amounts of milk, yogurt or aged cheese in a meal with other foods. For lactose-intolerant individuals, choose alternatives such as lactose-free yogurt or milk, or add a lactase enzyme preparation to milk before drinking it. People who choose to avoid all milk products, because of personal choice or health reasons, need to get their calcium from green, leafy vegetables, cooked fish with edible bones, tofu and other foods fortified with calcium such as juices, cereals and soy or rice beverages.

### **Here are some ideas to boost milk intake with lower fat or fat-free milk products:**

- Include fat-free or low-fat milk as a beverage at mealtime.
- For whole milk consumers, switch gradually to fat-free. Try reduced fat (2 percent), then (1 percent) and finally fat-free (skim).

- Cappuccino, chai tea or coffee latté consumers, choose fat-free or low-fat milk instead of cream or whole milk.
- Add fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water to oatmeal and hot cereals.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk when making condensed cream soups (such as cream of tomato).
- Eat fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a snack.
- Make a dip for fruits or vegetables from low-fat yogurt.
- Make fruit-yogurt smoothies in the blender using low-fat yogurt.
- For dessert, make a favorite pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Top casseroles, soups, stews or vegetables with low-fat shredded cheese.
- Top a baked potato with fat-free or low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream.
- Substitute low-fat or fat-free milk for whole milk in recipes.
- Add extra non-fat powdered milk to baking recipes.

## **References**

United States Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. 6th edition, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.