

Ask the Expert:

Is Dairy Important for Children and Child Growth?

Written by Sasha Harrison, Undergraduate Student in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

Dairy products are an important component of a child's diet. Recent research shows that regularly including dairy in children's diets is associated with meeting the recommended intake of many nutrients. Dairy products are excellent sources of calcium and vitamin D. These nutrients are vital for bone health, which is of great importance during childhood and adolescence when bone mass is being built. Physical activity is also a key factor to building strong bones, and children should be encouraged to get at least 1 hour of physical activity daily.

Dairy contains numerous other nutrients. Potassium in dairy products helps to maintain a healthy blood pressure, and magnesium is necessary for nerve, muscle, and heart function. Dairy foods are also a source of protein.



Most children 3 years and older do not meet the recommended daily intake of dairy. It is recommended that children consume 2 to 3 servings of dairy products a day. A serving includes a cup of yogurt, 1 ½ ounces of cheese (about the size of three dice or your index finger) or a cup of milk or fortified soy beverage (soymilk).

Choose reduced fat or fat-free versions of dairy products to help maintain healthy cholesterol and calorie intake. Cream cheese, cream, and butter are made from milk, but do not retain their calcium content, so they are not considered dairy foods.

Including dairy products in your child's diet ensures that they are getting the nutrients they need and helps build a strong foundation for lifelong health.

Sources: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/a-closer-look-at-current-intakes-and-recommended-shifts/>, <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/dairy>, [http://www.eatrightpro.org/resource/media/press,Zhao et al,The usual nutrient intakes of US children and adolescents by milk drinking behavior, unpublished data.](http://www.eatrightpro.org/resource/media/press,Zhao%20et%20al,%20The%20usual%20nutrient%20intakes%20of%20US%20children%20and%20adolescents%20by%20milk%20drinking%20behavior,%20unpublished%20data.;); Pictures: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/whats-your-plate/dairy-products>, http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/raw_milk.html



QUICK TIPS:

- Dairy products can improve picky eating.
- Sprinkling low-fat cheese on a vegetable may make a child more willing to eat it.
- Top yogurt with whole grain granola and fruit for an easy, healthy breakfast or after school snack.

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Food Safety: Dairy Storage and Shelf Life

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Dairy products are excellent foods to keep on hand at all times because they are versatile and packed with numerous key nutrients. Safe storage involves keeping the products refrigerated below 40° F at all times. Milk should be kept near the back of the shelves where it is colder, rather than in the door. Shelf-stable milk, powdered milk, or fortified soy beverages may be useful if refrigerator space is limited, as they can be stored at room temperature until they are opened or used.

The dates printed on dairy products are often misunderstood, but understanding what they mean can keep you healthy and save you money! A “Sell-By” date is typically what is included on dairy products. A “Sell-By” date tells a store how long to display an item for sale. There are often discounts on products that are nearing their “Sell-By” date, which can mean savings for the consumer. When shopping for dairy products, look at the “Sell-By” date and determine if you will be able to finish the product within the recommended safe period after this date.



Aim to finish milk within a week of its “Sell-By” date or after the container has been opened for 1 week. Buy items like yogurt and milk in small enough containers and incorporate them into various meals and snacks so they are more likely to be finished within one week of opening. Cheese generally has a longer shelf-life compared with milk and yogurt. Once opened, hard cheese like cheddar or Swiss can last 3 to 4 weeks in the refrigerator if wrapped tightly in plastic wrap. If mold grows on a hard cheese, it is safe to cut 1 inch off of every side surrounding the moldy area and eat the remainder of the cheese. Softer cheeses have shorter shelf lives with ricotta having the shortest shelf life at 5 days.

Dairy products that are no longer good to eat may display certain signs. If a product has a sour odor or looks chunky or moldy, it may be time to toss. If you have any concerns about a product’s safety, it is better not to eat it. Understanding the shelf life of dairy items can prevent foodborne illness, save you money, and reduce unnecessary food waste.



Sources: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/sites/default/files/misc/FoodProductDating.pdf>, <http://www.milkmeansmore.org/blog/2014/09/04/food-product-dates-clearing-up-the-confusion/#.Vvryr6vBGLN>, <http://www.eatright.org/resource/homefoodsafety/safety-tips/food/keep-your-dairy-and-egg-products-safe>, <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>; Pictures: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodAllergy/research/Pages/bakedMilk.aspx>, <http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Milkshelf.jpg>, <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/healthy-eating/daily-dairy-what-to-look-for-in-yogurt>, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2014-june/trends-in-us-per-capita-consumption-of-dairy-products,-1970-2012.aspx#.VwHTpxMrKCCQ>

Written by Nicolette Mehas, Research Assistant in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University



The technique used to cook a food affects its flavor, but also impacts its nutrient content. For example, each tablespoon of oil used during frying can add over 100 calories. While a small amount of oil added during stir-frying may contribute healthy fat to a dish, depending on the oil type and duration of frying, deep frying can add excessive fat and calories. Foods that are coated or breaded before they are fried absorb even more fat during the frying process.

Consuming fried foods on a normal basis may lead to an increased risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. There are various alternatives to frying including baking, steaming, grilling, and sautéing. Baking is when food is cooked using dry heat from the air in an oven; almost any food can be baked. One way to create a taste similar to a breaded, fried food is to lightly coat a food with egg whites, dip it in whole grain bread crumbs or cereal, and then bake it in the oven. Various herbs and spices can be used in baked dishes in place of excess fat. The recipes below feature healthy baked meals!

Sources: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Healthier-Preparation-Methods-for-Cooking_UCM_301484_Article.jsp#.Vvh915MrKCQ, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/healthy-cooking/art-20049346?pg=2>, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/eating-fried-foods-tied-to-increased-risk-of-diabetes-and-heart-disease/>; <http://www.livestrong.com/article/504208-how-many-calories-does-frying-add/>; Pictures: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodbornellnessContaminants/ChemicalContaminants/ucm053569.htm>, <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/whats-your-plate/taking-calories>



Baked Fried Chicken Breast with Mixed Vegetables Stuffed Peppers Delite

Ingredients (6 servings)

- non-stick cooking spray
- ½ cup plain dried bread crumbs
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal
- ½ teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1 large egg white
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ lbs boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 3 cups mixed vegetables

Directions:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°. Spray a medium baking pan with cooking spray. On waxed paper, mix bread crumbs, cheese, cornmeal, and ground red pepper.
2. In a bowl, beat egg white and salt. Dip each piece of chicken in egg white mixture, then coat with bread crumb mixture. Place chicken in pan; spray lightly with cooking spray.
3. Bake chicken for 30 minutes or until coating is crisp and juices run clear. Add mixed vegetables to chicken. Bake for 5 more minutes.

Recipe Sources:

Baked Fried Chicken with Mixed Vegetables from *Down Home Healthy Cooking* (<http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/diet/down-home-healthy-cooking.pdf>)

Stuffed Peppers Delite from *The 2015 Healthy Lunchtime Challenge Kids' State Dinner* Cookbook (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/healthy_lunchtime_challenge_kids_state_dinner_cookbook_2015.pdf)

Baked Fried Chicken Breast with Mixed Vegetables

Per serving: 245 Calories, 5.7g Total Fat, 2.3g Total Saturated Fat, 476mg Sodium, 21g Total Carbohydrate, 4g Total Sugars, 4.6g Total Dietary Fiber, 25.8g Total Protein

Stuffed Peppers Delite

Per serving: 234 Calories, 7g Total Fat, 2g Total Saturated Fat, 328mg Sodium, 26g Total Carbohydrate, 13g Total Sugars, 4.8g Total Dietary Fiber, 19g Total Protein

Ingredients (8 servings)

- 1 tablespoon oil
 - 1 pound ground turkey*
 - ¾ cup diced celery
 - ¾ cup diced mushrooms
 - ¾ cup diced yellow bell pepper
 - ½ cup peeled and diced yellow onion
 - ¼ cup chopped kale (or spinach)
 - 8 ounces tomato sauce
 - 8 ounces green chilies
 - 1 cup whole-grain rice
 - 8 assorted bell peppers, tops and seeds removed
 - Low-fat mozzarella cheese to taste
 - 1 can pineapple rings
- * Substitute beans for a vegetarian option

Directions:

1. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the turkey and cook for about 10 minutes, or until cooked through.
2. Add celery, mushrooms, yellow bell pepper, onion, and kale and cook for 7 minutes. Add the tomato sauce and chilies and cook for 10 minutes. In a medium saucepan, cook rice and add to the turkey-veggie mix and stir.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the bell peppers in a baking dish. Add ½ cup of the turkey-veggie mixture into each pepper.
4. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese. Serve with grilled pineapple slices.

Underlining denotes a TEFAP commodity ingredient

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April is National Cancer Control Month

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National Cancer Control Month takes place every April. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in America. This year the White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force was created to advance cancer research and treatment through the collaboration of patients, experts, and organizations.

While anyone can develop cancer, there are certain lifestyle choices that can decrease the risk of getting cancer such as quitting smoking, controlling sun exposure, limiting alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables, and exercising. Regular screenings by a health care provider can help to find the signs of cancer at an earlier stage or allow for precancerous growths to be removed. This April take the steps necessary to reduce your cancer risk and encourage your loved ones to do the same.

WHAT: National Cancer Control Month

WHERE: Across the United States. Visit www.Cancer.gov for more information

WHEN: Every April

WHY: Over one and a half million new cancer cases will be diagnosed in the United States this year. With increased awareness, preventative measures, and advances in treatment we can work to better control cancer.