

FIVE REASONS WHY SCHOOL MEALS THAT INCLUDE DAIRY ARE SO IMPORTANT

SYRACUSE, NY, UNITED STATES, March 13, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last week, schools across the country celebrated National School Breakfast Week. Why? School meals including dairy are often the only meals that some children receive each day.

Here's five facts to consider:

1: Nearly 30 million children rely on school meals every day. For low-income children, school meals provide 77% of their daily dairy milk consumption and 70% of total dairy consumption, according to a [2017 study published in Preventative Medicine Report](#). Milk and dairy foods—like cheese and yogurt—are critical in ensuring that children of all economic backgrounds can benefit from nutrients found in school meals.

2: Food consumed at schools has the highest nutritional quality. Children who participate in school meals consume more dairy milk, fruits and vegetables than non-participants, and they consume fewer desserts and snacks.

3: Many children's diets, especially those from communities of color, do not meet the daily dairy consumption recommended by the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This is significant because nutrient-rich milk provides calcium, vitamin D and potassium - nutrients of public health concern that are lacking in many children's diets.

4. Drinking flavored milk can help children increase their nutrient consumption. A 2022 study from [ACTA Scientific Nutritional Health](#) showed that consumers of flavored milk drank approximately one additional serving of dairy milk daily, which leads to a higher intake of calcium, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus and vitamins A, D and B-12 and riboflavin than those who don't consume flavored milk. In fact, they consumed 51% more vitamin D, 27% more



Without school meals, children may not get enough of milk's essential nutrients.

calcium and 16% more potassium compared to non-flavored milk drinkers.

5. Flavored milk contributes only 4% of added sugars in the diets of children 2-18 years old according to [NHANES data](#).

The bulk of added sugars comes from soft drinks according to a Center's for Disease Control and Prevention Health Survey. In addition, National Dairy Council affirms that since 2007, the U.S. dairy community reduced added sugars in flavored milk served in schools by 50%. The average flavored milk served in schools has 126 calories—just 29 more calories than unflavored milk.

These are just a few reasons why school meals are so important to a child's health and how milk and dairy foods play a key role in helping children meet their nutrient needs. Without this critical food group as part of a healthy eating pattern, children may not receive all the nutrients they need to grow and succeed during their informative years.

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