

Make Your Milk Low-Fat, or No-Fat

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I've heard just about every excuse there is for why adults and children won't include fat-free (skim) or even low fat (1%) milk in their daily meals and snacks. In light of all the research that demonstrates the importance of including fat-free or low fat milk in our diets I think most of the excuses that I hear are just that -- excuses for not taking care of our health.

Almost everyone has done something difficult or at least something they didn't want to do because it was the best for them. If you think trying fat-free milk is going to be as difficult as getting a tooth filled, taking a test, or going for a job interview, think again! The most difficult part in making the change to fat-free or low fat milk may be admitting that you actually like it.

After attending a recent University of Florida IFAS Extension training session, **Osteoporosis: A Critical Issue in Women's Health**, it continues to be clear that the majority of Americans do not consume the recommended three 1-cup portions of low fat or fat-free milk or milk foods daily (recommended for those over the age of 8). For good long term health we need the nutrients provided by milk and milk foods throughout our lives. It is especially important that young people get enough of these foods because calcium builds the bone strength they need to reduce the risk of bone loss and osteoporosis later in life.

Fat-free milk and milk foods contain the same amount of high quality nutrients as whole milk, but do **NOT** contain the fat, saturated fat or cholesterol. Research indicates that whole milk and milk products are a major source of fat in the American diet. Reducing the total amount of fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet of Americans over the age of 2 years can contribute to a reduction in health risks associated with high fat diets. Changing milk consumption patterns to low fat and fat-free choices can reduce fat, saturated fat and cholesterol intake while maintaining the consumption of critical nutrients such as protein, calcium, and vitamin D.

Did you know:

- 1 cup of whole milk has the same amount of saturated fat as 5 strips of bacon, or 2 doughnuts or 1 hotdog or 1 fast food hamburger?
- In blind taste tests of more than 1900 children and adults the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) found that 95% liked the taste of 1% or fat-free milk?
- Informal taste tests conducted with Leon County school children and participants in UF IFAS Leon County Extension nutrition classes produced similar results as the CSPI taste tests?
- 2% milk is not low fat? Only 1% and fat-free milk are low fat.
- Children who drink 1 cup of 1% milk instead of 2% milk during the school day would cut almost 19 pounds of fat from their diet during their 13 years of school?

During June we all celebrate Dairy Days. Get a head start on the festivities with some of these tips:

- ❖ Choose fat-free or low fat yogurt, frozen yogurt or ice cream for dessert. Remember to check the Food Facts label.
- ❖ Top salads, casseroles or tacos with low fat or fat-free cheeses.
- ❖ Keep fat-free dry milk powder and fat-free evaporated milk on kitchen shelves for adding to recipes or for emergencies.
- ❖ Eat hot and cold cereals with low fat or fat-free milk -- try cooking oatmeal in milk for a creamier texture.
- ❖ Make muffin or pancake batters with low fat or fat-free milk.
- ❖ Make creamy soups, like potato soup with low fat or fat-free milk.
- ❖ Use low fat or fat-free-milk to make fruit shakes, smoothies and instant puddings.
- ❖ If you take an outing for a specialty drink remember you must **ask** for fat-free milk before your favorite hot or frozen milk beverage is made.

Sources and for more information:

<http://fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/pyramid/index.htm>

<http://www.cspinet.org>

<http://MyPyramid.gov>

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www.doh.state.fl.us/family_cvh/nutrition/milk.html

<http://www.americanheart.org>