



JULY 2022 | UBC ACTIVE KIDS

July Newsletter

DO CHILDREN NEED DAIRY IN THEIR DIETS?



Walking through the grocery store, it is easy to get confused by the vast selection and variety of milk and dairy alternatives available. But which ones are suitable for children and are there plant based milk alternatives which can still fuel children? Read below to have all your milk questions answered.

INFANTS AGED 0-6 MONTHS

The World Health Organization and Health Canada recommend **exclusive breastfeeding** or **formula** feeding for an infants **first six months** of life followed by continued breastfeeding for **two or more years**. Animal milk or milk alternatives are not recommended as they do not contain a comparable balance of carbohydrates, fats and proteins or vitamins and minerals to human breastmilk or commercial formulas.

Infants can continue breastfeeding as long as mother and child desire, as complimentary foods are introduced starting at 6 months.

CHILDREN OLDER THAN 1 YEAR

Health Canada's guidelines for daily calcium intake are as follows:

- **Children aged 1-3 yrs : 700mg/day**
- **Children aged 4-8 yrs : 1000mg/day**
- **Children/Adolescents aged 9-18 yrs : 1300mg/day**

Consuming two to three 250ml servings of milk or milk alternatives (300mg/250ml) is recommended to help children reach their recommended daily calcium intake.

MILK VS. MILK ALTERNATIVES

Both milk and a fortified milk alternative will supply your children with ample amounts of calcium and vitamin D, two micronutrients that are essential for healthy bone development in growing children. However they differ in protein, carbohydrates and fat (see below).

	COWS MILK	SOY MILK	ALMOND MILK	OAT MILK
PROS ✓	A source of carbohydrates, protein and fat (depending on the %).	A source of carbohydrates, protein and fat. Made of plants, without animals and are more environmentally sustainable	A source of carbohydrates (if sweetened) and a small source of fats.	A source of carbohydrates and a small source of fat.
CONS ✗	Contains lactose and produces more greenhouse gases to produce versus milk alternatives.	Contains soybeans, has a grittier texture and is more expensive than cows milk.	Is more expensive than cows milk and lacks protein.	Is more expensive than cows milk and lacks protein.

The bottom line is any milk or milk alternative will supply children with calcium and vitamin D needed for healthy bone development. If children can meet these needs through other foods, than dairy and dairy alternatives are not necessary. However this can be challenging which is why drinking milk or milk alternatives is recommended for growing children.