

RAISE YOUR HAND FOR CHOCOLATE MILK Q&A – November 9, 2009

What is the Raise Your Hand for Chocolate Milk Campaign?

- The Raise Your Hand for Chocolate Milk Campaign is an awareness and education campaign by the nation's dairy farmers and milk processors to inform parents about the nutritional benefits of chocolate milk and call on them to show their support for keeping it in school cafeterias.
- There's been a lot of debate over the state of school lunch lately and while there have been many steps forward, there's also been increased discussion about taking chocolate milk out of schools, a move that many health experts agree could do more harm than good.
- Groups calling for chocolate milk to be taken out of the cafeteria due to concerns over added sugars are not looking at the big picture:
 - Flavored milk offers the same nine essential nutrients as white milk, including three of the five "nutrients of concern" that kids are not getting enough of – calcium, magnesium and potassium, as well as vitamin D.
 - Children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers.
 - Nearly 70 percent of the milk children choose to drink in school is low-fat or fat free flavored and research shows that they will drink less milk (and get fewer nutrients) when it's taken away.
 - Leading health and nutrition organizations – including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, American Heart Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association and School Nutrition Association – recognize the valuable role that milk, including flavored milk, can play in meeting daily nutrient needs, and helping kids get the 3 daily servings of milk recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Consistent with the Dietary Guidelines, all recognize that the small amount of added sugar in flavored milk is an acceptable trade-off for the nutrients provided.
 - The dairy industry is committed to continued innovation to provide great-tasting products that meet American's dynamic health and dietary needs at home, at school and on-the-go. Today, kids can find even more nutritious milk, cheese and yogurt options in the packaging they prefer in their cafeteria. Some of the latest innovations include new reduced-sugar and calorie flavored milk and reduced-fat and reduced-sodium cheese varieties for foodservice and vending.
- **We are asking parents to show their support by visiting RaiseYourHand4Milk.com and signing the Raise Your Hand petition.** While on the site, they can also join the campaign's group on Facebook and follow the campaign on Twitter via @4chocolatemilk.

What are the primary campaign elements?

- RaiseYourHand4Milk.com is the centerpiece of the campaign, with a petition for parents to sign to show their support for chocolate milk, and facts and science about flavored milk and its role in children's diets. There are also video testimonials from parents, including celebrities and health and nutrition experts, on why they are raising their hands.
- The campaign launched this week with a full-page ad in *USA Today* and online media directing parents to RaiseYourHand4Milk.com.
- The campaign will extend throughout the school year with additional efforts.

Why is this an issue now?

- The topic of healthy school lunches is being discussed across the country by many different groups with greater frequency. So the time is right to educate parents and health professionals about the role flavored milk can play in a healthy diet for growing kids and teens.
- In addition, the milk processors conducted a 2008/2009 survey of food service directors which found that 16% of participating food service directors reported experiencing more challenges on flavored milk. And that percentage rose as high as 20%-30% in some regions like the West Coast and New England.

What is the role of chocolate milk in school lunch and the impact of removing it on children's diets/nutrition?

- Milk provides nutrients essential for good health and kids will drink more when it's flavored. In fact, nearly 70% of the milk kids choose in schools is flavored.
- Flavored milk contains the same nine essential nutrients as white milk and is a healthful alternative to soft drinks.
- Drinking lowfat or fat free white or flavored milk helps kids get the three daily servings of milk recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and provides three of the five "nutrients of concern" that children do not get enough of – calcium, potassium and magnesium, as well as vitamin D.
- Studies show that children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers.
- And as the recent Chartwells study found, kids drink less milk if flavored milk is taken away. And that means they are missing out on the nine essential nutrients offered in every cup of lowfat or fat free flavored milk during critical years of growth.

If schools do decide to remove chocolate milk, what is the potential impact to the milk and dairy industry?

- The majority of overall milk consumed at home, on the go and at school is not chocolate milk. Lowfat and fat free white milk is the primary focus. But chocolate milk is an extremely important category because it is what kids like and choose to drink – especially at school.
- And as the recent Chartwells study found, kids drink less milk if flavored milk is taken away. And that means they are missing out on the nine essential nutrients offered in every cup of lowfat or fat free flavored milk during critical years of growth.
- We also know that once kids and/or teens stop drinking milk it starts a lifetime trend of reduced milk and nutrient consumption that is difficult to reverse.

I've heard some dietitians and food service directors feel chocolate milk shouldn't be offered in schools.

- Leading health and nutrition organizations – including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, American Heart Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association and School Nutrition Association – recognize the valuable role lowfat and fat free milk, including flavored milk, can play in helping kids meet their nutrient needs, and helping kids get the 3 daily servings of milk recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- What we've found in schools is that most dietitians and health officials are very supportive of kids and teens getting milk in their diets by drinking lowfat or fat free regular and flavored milk.

General Chocolate Milk Questions

Wouldn't kids be better off drinking white milk or water over chocolate milk?

- Flavored milk has the same nine essential nutrients as white milk and kids drink more when it is flavored.
- Flavored milk accounts for less than 3.5 percent of added sugar intake in children ages 6-12 and less than 2 percent in teens. To put this in context, soft drinks, fruit drinks and tea provide a combined 31.5 percent of total added sugar intake for children ages 6-12 and 40% for teens. *According to NPD Nutrient Intake Database; 2 years ending Feb. 2009.*

Leading health and nutrition organizations – including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, American Heart Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association and School Nutrition Association – have recognized the valuable role that milk, including flavored milk, can play in meeting daily nutrient needs, and helping kids get the 3 daily servings of milk recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Consistent with the Dietary Guidelines, all recognize that the small amount of added sugar in flavored milk is an acceptable trade-off for the nutrients provided.

Are you suggesting that kids should make chocolate milk their primary beverage of choice?

- Not at all. I'm saying that lowfat and fat free chocolate milk have a place in a well-balanced diet, providing the same nine essential nutrients as white milk that kids need for growth and development and three of the five "nutrients of concern" they need more of – calcium, magnesium and potassium as well as vitamin D.

Doesn't drinking chocolate milk add unnecessary sugar and fat to a child's diet?

- Research indicates children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers.
- The small amount of sugar that flavored milk contributes to a child's diet can help kids enjoy milk. Research shows that kids who drink milk and flavored milks have better overall diets than those who regularly drink sodas and sweetened fruit drinks.
- In addition, a study found that children who drink flavored or plain milk consume more nutrients and have lower or comparable body mass index than children who don't drink milk.

Why aren't you focusing your efforts on getting more kids to drink regular fat-free milk?

- The fact is, some kids won't drink milk at all if chocolate milk is unavailable, so it's important to approach this from two fronts: making sure kids understand the benefits of all lowfat and fat free milks and not cutting out the chocolate milk choice.
- Because kids like the taste and research shows children who drink flavored milk more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers, offering flavored milk is an excellent way to increase milk consumption among children and make their diets more nutritious.

Doesn't chocolate milk contain just as much sugar and calories as a soft drink?

- There is a big difference in the nutrition a kid gets from a soft drink and milk:
 - Chocolate milk provides the same nine essential nutrients as white milk. It provides three of the five "nutrients of concern" identified by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* that children do not get enough of - calcium, magnesium and potassium, as well as vitamin D.
 - Leading health and nutrition organizations – including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, American Heart Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association and School Nutrition Association – recognize the valuable role milk, including flavored milk, can play in helping kids meet their nutrient needs, and helping kids get the 3 daily servings of milk recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Consistent with the Dietary Guidelines, all recognize the small amount of added sugar in flavored milk is an acceptable trade-off for the nutrients provided.
 - Studies show that children who drink flavored milk drink more milk overall, meet more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers. Additionally, kids who drink milk drink fewer sugar sodas and fruit drinks and are more likely to be at a healthy weight compared to kids who drink little or no milk.
 - Lowfat chocolate milk is a healthful alternative to soft drinks and contains the same nine essential nutrients as white milk.

Isn't one of the problems with chocolate milk the fact that many chocolate milk formulations contain high fructose corn syrup?

- Regardless of the sweetener used, studies show that children who drink flavored milk drink more milk overall, meet more of their nutrient needs; do not consume more added sugar, fat or calories; and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers.
- The dairy industry is committed to continued innovation to provide great-tasting products that meet American's dynamic health and dietary needs at home, at school and on-the-go. Today, kids can find even more nutritious milk, cheese and yogurt options in the packaging they prefer in their cafeteria. Some of the latest innovations include new reduced-sugar and calorie flavored milk and reduced-fat and reduced-sodium cheese varieties for foodservice and vending.
- High fructose corn syrup is nutritionally the same as table sugar. It has the same number of calories, the same sweetness and is handled the same by your body. It contains the same two compositional sugars (fructose and glucose) as table sugar, honey and many fruit juice concentrates, in roughly equal amounts. There is no nutritional benefit gained by replacing high fructose corn syrup with another caloric sweetener.

- A 2004 report issued by the Center for Food and Nutrition Policy at Virginia Tech concluded that: “there is currently no convincing evidence to support a link between high fructose corn syrup consumption and overweight/obesity.” (http://ceresnet.org/images/Misc/HFCS_Executive_Summary.pdf)

What is the industry doing to innovate dairy products to meet kids evolving nutrition needs and taste preferences?

- The dairy industry is committed to improving childhood nutrition at schools. Related to flavored milk, this is shown in our efforts to reformulate products to be lower in sugar and still pass taste tests, so the products don’t get thrown away.
 - *Reformulation efforts* -- Knowing that many schools want to reduce sugar content in all their offerings, more than 90 industry-partner dairies across the U.S. have proactively reformulated flavored milk to be lower in both sugar and total calories. These new products aim for 150 calories and less than 25 grams of sugar, all while maintaining great taste, so that youth will still drink it instead of throwing it away — and so that flavored milk remains one of youth’s favorite nutritious beverages.
 - Currently, there is no national legislative standard on flavored milk in schools. The School Nutrition Association (SNA) recommends selecting flavored milk that contains no more than 28 grams of sugar per eight-ounce serving.
 - *Sensory research* -- The dairy industry has conducted research to see how low the calorie count can be for flavored milk while still being palatable to children. This research suggests that flavored milk in the 150 calorie to 170 calorie range for an eight-ounce portion – depending on brand – meets children’s taste approval.
 - Great-tasting milk is crucial: No one wins when children throw away their nutrient-rich, lower-calorie flavored milk because they don’t enjoy the taste. So, we encourage school districts choosing flavored milks to consider one that’s been taste-tested among students.

What is the dairy industry doing to help combat childhood obesity?

- **Fuel Up to Play 60 is the best overall example of NDC’s commitment to improving children’s health.**
 - FUTP60 is a new, youth-driven nutrition and physical activity program initiated by NDC and the NFL.
 - Launched last month, it will reach 60,000 schools and 36 million 4th-10th graders in the 2009-2010 school year.
 - FUTP60 engages youth to lead programs to improve their schools’ access to nutrition and physical activity, encouraging students to “fuel up” with the food groups they most need – fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat and fat free dairy – and “get up and play” with 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
 - The program engages youth to invest in their own health by collaborating with youth and adult mentors in the school and community to activate customized in-school programs.
 - Parents, youth and educators can go to www.fueluptoplay60.org to learn more.

Health Organization Statements

- The **American Academy of Pediatrics**, in a policy statement discouraging soft drinks in schools,¹ and in its report on optimizing children’s and adolescents’ bone health and calcium intakes,² encourages consumption of nutritious beverages including lowfat or fat free white or flavored milk, water or real fruit or vegetable juice as healthful alternatives to soft drinks.
- The **American Dietetic Association** states that “by increasing the palatability of nutrient-dense foods/beverages, sweeteners can promote diet healthfulness.”³ This concept is also supported by the **2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans** which states that enhancing the palatability of nutrient-dense foods, such as milk, may improve nutrient intake.⁴

- In addition, the **American Heart Association** (AHA) supports a positive role for added sugars to help increase intakes of nutrient-rich foods including dairy foods. Specifically, in their scientific statement on Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health, the AHA states, “when sugars are added to otherwise nutrient-rich foods, such as sugar-sweetened dairy products like flavored milk and yogurt ... the quality of children’s and adolescents’ diet improves, and in the case of flavored milks, no adverse effects on weight status were found.”⁵

1. American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on School Health. Policy Statement, Soft Drinks in Schools. *Pediatrics*. 2004;113: 152-154.
2. Greer FR, Krebs NF, Committee on Nutrition. Optimizing Bone Health and Calcium Intakes of Infants, Children and Adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2006;117: 578-585.
3. American Dietetic Association. Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.2004; 104: 255-275.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2005.
5. Johnson RK, Lawrence JA Brands AM, et al. Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2009; 120:1011-1020.