

milk and more...  
throughout the  
school day





head first for milk



# ...when your child starts primary school

Eating well is important throughout the school day, and making milk part of that healthy routine is a great start to your child's time at school.

Many schools provide breaktime milk through the **School Milk Scheme**. Parents make a contribution towards the cost; this varies from area to area but, on average, 189ml carton of milk costs **around 20p a day** ....fantastic value when you consider the benefits.

*A carton of school milk has calcium, which is important for growing bones*  
... the third pint will provide around half of a five-year-old child's daily calcium needs.

*Mid-morning milk is also a good source of protein and vitamin B12*  
... and contains other important nutrients including vitamin B2, iodine, phosphorus and potassium.

*Milk is a good breaktime choice for children's teeth*

... milk and water are the only drinks recommended by dentists for between meals.

*Breaktime milk can help beat thirst and keep children well hydrated*  
... **ask at your child's new school about how he or she can receive breaktime milk.**

*Find out more about good food throughout the school day ...*



*fuel for school*

# ...start smart and keep energy levels up

School mornings can be hectic but it's definitely worth making sure your child has time for breakfast.

By breakfast time, most children won't have eaten for more than 10 hours so their bodies, and especially their brains, need refuelling.

Breakfast can give children's daily nutrient needs a boost too; providing them with some of the important vitamins and minerals they need for good health.

## Not-so-smart starts!

...one in ten primary school children skip breakfast.

## Tips for a healthy breakfast:

- 1 **Wholegrain** varieties of cereals and bread are the best for filling-power and longer-lasting energy.
- 2 Including some **fruit** at breakfast time gets children off to a good start toward their 5-a-day fruit and veg target.
- 3 **Milk** on cereal, in a smoothie or just as it comes will add extra protein, vitamins and minerals. **Yogurt** is a good choice too.
- 4 An occasional **Ulster fry** can be part of a healthy balanced diet - just not too often!



A close-up photograph of a young girl with brown hair in a braid, wearing a red sweater. She has a white, powdered mustache drawn on her upper lip and is smiling while holding a white glass of milk. The background is softly blurred, showing a pink wall and a wooden surface.

something  
to smile about

# ...healthy snacking for healthy teeth

Many primary schools now have healthy snacking schemes allowing only nutritious foods and drinks such as fruit and milk at breaktime. This is good news for children's diets in general, and for their teeth in particular.

That's because what children eat and drink between meals can have a big effect on their dental health.

Every time children eat or drink something containing sugar, bacteria in plaque (the sticky coating on teeth) use the sugar as a fuel and produce acid as a waste product. Acid attacks the teeth. The more often teeth are exposed to acid, the greater the risk of decay. So dentists recommend keeping sugary food and drink mainly to meal times.

## *Sweet enough already?*

... for tooth friendly between-meal snacks and drinks try:

bread e.g. sandwiches or toast

*fruit*

small cubes of cheese

*vegetables e.g. pieces of raw carrot, tomato wedges*

unsweetened yogurt and fromage frais

*water*

milk

## *Erosion*

Sugar isn't the only issue for dental health. Acidic drinks such as fruit juice, squash and fizzy drinks (even 'diet' ones) can also damage teeth by a process called erosion. As with sugary stuff, the best protection plan is to keep acidic drinks for mealtimes.

**Milk and water are the only drinks recommended by dentists for between meals.**

## *Did you know?*

Dental health is improving in Northern Ireland. By the time they leave primary school, around half of our children have tooth decay, which is down from three quarters 10 years ago. But this is still too many!



have you heard?





# ...milk is top of the class for nutrition

As well as calcium, a carton of mid-morning milk provides lots of other essential nutrients including protein, potassium, iodine, phosphorus and B-vitamins.

It's a powerful boost to meeting children's nutrient needs; a carton of school milk will provide more than half of a five-year-old child's calcium, phosphorus, iodine and vitamin B2 requirements and a third of their protein needs.

**Calcium :** *needed for growing bones*

**Vitamin B2 :** *helps maintain normal skin*

**Vitamin B12 :** *helps make red blood cells*

**Potassium :** *needed for nerve function*

**Iodine :** *needed for children's growth*

**Phosphorus :** *used for energy release*

**Protein :** *for growth and repair*

Percentage (%) of a primary school child's nutrient needs\* provided by a carton (189ml) of semi-skimmed milk:

	4 - 6 year old	7 - 10 year old
Vitamin B2	59	47
Vitamin B12	100+	100+
Calcium	52	43
Phosphorus	52	41
Iodine	59	53
Potassium	28	15
Protein	34	24

\*Reference Nutrient Intake

All the milk provided in primary schools is **semi-skimmed**. Semi-skimmed milk has fewer calories and less fat than whole milk, and less vitamin A. But levels of other nutrients including protein, calcium, and vitamins such as vitamin B2 and B12 are not reduced.

Breaktime milk is also a **good source of fluid** to help beat thirst and keep children well hydrated. If children are dehydrated they can feel groggy and irritable and their memory and concentration suffer.



oh no...  
not that  
again!





# ideas for lunches they'll love...not trade!

If your child is taking packed lunches to school, you might find that coming up with healthy ideas they'll enjoy is a challenge! So here's some help and inspiration...

As an easy guide to getting the lunchbox balance right, include at least one item from each of the four main food groups, and save fatty and sugary foods for an occasional treat.

- 1 Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- 2 Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
- 3 Fruit and vegetables
- 4 Milk and dairy foods

It's a good idea to vary what you put in your child's lunchbox - that way their lunches will be more interesting and they'll be getting a wider selection of nutrients. But don't try too many new foods in the first few weeks of starting school - until they've had time to settle in, stick to things you know they'll enjoy.

## Drinks: at lunch time

Swap high-sugar fizzy drinks and squashes for milk, still or fizzy water, unsweetened fruit juice, and lower-sugar yogurt or milk drinks.

## A week of ideas:

### MONDAY:

- \* Cheese and salad sandwich on wholegrain bread
- \* Grapes and satsuma \* Slice of fruit bread \* Carton of milk

### TUESDAY:

- \* Mini pitta pocket with egg salad \* Bottle of fizzy water
- \* Individual can of fruit pieces in juice \* Fromage frais

### WEDNESDAY:

- \* Tuna and sweetcorn pasta salad \* Fruit scone
- \* Apple \* Carton of milk

### THURSDAY:

- \* Chicken wrap \* Cherry tomatoes
- \* Yogurt \* Carton of unsweetened orange juice

### FRIDAY:

- \* Bagel with cream cheese and tomato \* Banana
- \* Small box of raisins \* Carton of milk



**The Dairy Council for Northern Ireland**  
Shaftesbury House, Edgewater Office Park,  
Edgewater Road, Belfast BT3 9JQ

**Tel: 028 9077 0113**

**[www.dairycouncil.co.uk](http://www.dairycouncil.co.uk)**