

KATIE BAMBACHT

MILK MYTHS DEBUNKED & MORE

JUNE 2019 SPOTLIGHT MEMBER OF THE MONTH



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MEET KATIE BAMBACHT, RDN, LDN, SNS

I'm the Director of School Nutrition for National Dairy Council (NDC), a non-profit organization founded by America's dairy farmers over a century ago. NDC is dedicated to translating science-based health and nutrition information to help improve public health. In my role, I manage collaborative efforts with national school nutrition partnerships and serve as a resource to the dairy community on school feeding programs.

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I have worked as an expert in Child Nutrition Programs for over a decade – starting with Chartwells–Thompson Hospitality as the Senior Resident Dietitian directing full nutrition support for over 450 Chicago Public Schools followed by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago coordinating the Child and Adult Care Food Program for Child Development Centers.

I'm passionate about improving childhood health & wellness and believe that the nutrition impact and value of school meals make them a vital resource for our nation's children. I strive in my work to help children eat right, move more, fight hunger and provide education around sustainable practices from farm to table and the body of science supporting dairy's role in child health & wellness.

The Undeniable Dairy Campaign

The Undeniably Dairy campaign is a multi-year initiative to help connect the public to where their dairy foods come from, including sharing stories, experiences and information on dairy to counter misinformation that is bombarding consumers. Throughout the initiative, we are demonstrating the commitment the dairy community has to ensuring dairy is nutrient-rich, locally driven and responsibly produced.

Over the past two years, the U.S. dairy community has partnered with Discovery Education through the Undeniably Dairy initiative to virtually bring grade 5-8 classrooms across the country to the farm, helping kids learn about how milk turns into the dairy foods they love. Through a virtual field trip, 360 video and images, classroom guides, and lesson plans, more than 2 million students have learned where their dairy foods come from and how animal care, sustainable practices, science and technology play a role. The virtual content gives students a firsthand view into how farmers take care of the land, their cows and help nourish communities. Check it out **here**.

The benefit of milk & other dairy in school meals

Milk, cheese and yogurt contribute important nutrients for children's growth and development and the school meal programs are a very important insurance plan that help students get their recommended daily dairy. In fact, low-fat and fat-free milk is an integral part of the federal school meal programs because of its nutrient package – providing the No. 1 food source of nine essential nutrients in the diets of America's children and adolescents. Milk also is the No. 1 food source of three out of the four nutrients of concern identified in the Dietary Guidelines: calcium, potassium and vitamin D. For that reason, students benefit when school milk consumption increases.

Milk is under-consumed by most age groups, so increased consumption of school milk will help bring students closer to nutrient recommendations for calcium, potassium, vitamin D and other key nutrients provided by milk. A recent study showed that 77% of daily milk intake for children ages 5-18 comes from national school meals programs making it a critical venue to help children meet their nutritional needs.

Because of their protein content, yogurt and cheese are included in the meat/meat alternate category of foods that may be served as one of the components for the NSLP, SBP, CACFP and SFSP.

History of school milk: Serving milk in schools began even before federally subsidized school lunches were widespread. Federally supported milk programs began in Chicago and New York in 1940, providing milk to schools located in low-income neighborhoods. Poverty and malnutrition lingered following the Great Depression, and public concern helped build support for supplying milk to areas in need. Today, school meal programs continue to help address food and nutrition security for those students who face hunger.



School nutrition professionals sometimes get requests to switch from cow's milk to plant-based milks, unrelated to allergies or intolerances.

What should their response be, from the dietitian's perspective and from a business perspective? What are the benefits of drinking cow's milk rather than milk alternatives?

From a business perspective, a school has discretion to offer a milk substitute as part of the reimbursable meal to a child with a medical or special dietary need other than a disability. However, USDA requires substitute beverages be fortified to contain the same nutrient levels as milk. According to **USDA's final rule**, this "ensures consistency of standards among milk substitutes offered in the school lunch and breakfast programs and assures that students who consume nondairy beverage alternates receive important nutrients found in milk." The availability of nondairy beverages meeting the nutrient standards in this rule varies across the country.

From a dietitian's perspective, it's important to be able to communicate to parents and students the nutritional differences between cow's milk and plant-based beverages. A NDC **comparison** between milk and several plant-based beverages shows that commercially available products typically fall short of milk.

Children need foods that will help them grow and stay healthy. Although many milk alternatives are often fortified with calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients, there is no guarantee the levels will be equal to that of cow's milk. An **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) report** emphasizes the importance of three servings of dairy foods for everyone 9 and older to supply calcium and vitamin D for children's bone health.

The AAP report also points out the calcium in calcium-fortified milk substitutes, such as soy-or almond-based beverages, may be less available to the body to help build bone than the calcium in cow's milk. Further research is needed regarding the mineral levels and bioavailability of these fortified beverages. A **study** in children ages 1 to 6 illustrated this. Results showed those who only drank non-dairy beverages were more than twice as likely to have lower vitamin D levels (less than 50 nmol/L) than children who drank only cow's milk. The authors suggested that the findings are linked to the fact that the non-dairy beverages were fortified with less vitamin D than cow's milk. Children need adequate amounts of vitamin D and other nutrients to support bone health. Fortified cow's milk has been identified as the main food source of vitamin D in the American diet for children and adults.

This infographic is a good reminder of milks unique nutrient package.

Myth vs Fact

National Dairy Council and the broader dairy community work to correct misperceptions and misinformation about dairy. We educate through our digital and social media channels as well as work one on one with health and wellness experts and organizations, including school nutrition professionals and registered dietitians, to provide science-based education about dairy's contributions to health across the lifespan as well as sustainable food systems.

Myth: Lactose intolerance means no dairy

Fact: Lactose intolerance is an individualized condition and people with lactose intolerance often are able to tolerate varying degrees of lactose in dairy foods. Lactose intolerance is not common among children. Eliminating dairy foods can lead to lower consumption of essential nutrients – potentially with unintended health consequences. For those who have lactose intolerance, it is about understanding how much lactose is in their favorite foods and how much they can handle at once. Plus, lactose-free cow's milk is real milk, just without the lactose. Check out these 12 tips to help manage lactose intolerance.

Myth: Milk is not local

Fact: Dairy farming occurs in every state. Most people will be surprised to know that they live within 100 miles of a dairy farm. In fact, milk's journey from farm to the store takes only about 48 hours. Now that's fresh & local!

Myth: Organic milk is better than traditional milk.

Fact: Organic and conventional milk are equally nutritious and wholesome. They both contain the same unique package of 9 essential nutrients and must adhere to strict federal standards. "Organic" refers to a difference in on-farm practices.

Myth: The added sugars in chocolate milk will make my child hyper.

Fact: According to scientific research, sugar does not cause hyperactivity or affect behavior in children, nor does it negatively interfere with mental performance.

Myth: Chocolate milk is not as nutritious as white milk.

Fact: No matter the flavor, milk provides nine essential nutrients. The major difference between white and flavored milk in schools is the slightly higher carbohydrate and calorie content due to the addition of sugar. While some have concerns about added sugar in milk, leading nutrition and health organizations agree that enhancing the taste of nutrient-dense foods such as whole grain cereal, flavored milk and yogurt by adding small amounts of sugar within healthy dietary patterns, especially for children, is a better use of added sugars than in nutrient-poor, highly sweetened foods.

Additional adds on flavored milk

Dairy consumption falls below recommended amounts by 6 years of age, on average, and continues to fall below recommended consumption levels with increasing age. Therefore, ensuring that white or flavored milk is served at each meal, especially for children, could be a key strategy to help reverse these trends. All flavored milk – whether, low-fat or fat-free – provides the same nine essential nutrients as white milk, including calcium, , phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D, B12, riboflavin (B2), pantothenic acid (B5) and niacin (B3). American school-aged children who drink flavored milk tend to have higher total milk and nutrient intakes, but not higher BMIs or added sugar intakes. Flavored milk's nutrient contributions compare favorably with its share of added sugars (an average of 4 percent) in children and adolescent's daily diets, which is significantly less than what is contributed by sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) such as soda and fruit drinks. Therefore, flavored milk is one option to help children meet their dairy and nutrient needs. About two-thirds of the milk served in schools is flavored, mostly chocolate. The dairy community has been proactively working to improve flavored milk, while maintaining the good taste that kids love. Since 2007, dairy companies have reduced added sugars by about 55 percent in the flavored milk offered in schools. Today, all milk in schools is low-fat or fat-free, and the majority of flavored milk in schools has an average of 122 calories – just 25 more calories than white milk.

Resource: 5 Reasons Why Flavored Milk Matters

The future of milk in school nutrition programs

What do you see as the future of milk in school nutrition programs? Any new campaigns or changes being made in the dairy industry? (example-- more schools connecting with dairy farmers, new sweeteners, new ways of using milk in schools, the challenge of potential policy changes etc.) Looking to the future, our efforts will continue to focus on connecting students to where their food comes from through our dairy farmers and broader dairy community who can share sustainable practices and health and wellness benefits of dairy from farm to table. We will also continue to work with school nutrition professionals to explore innovative ways to increase meal participation and consumption of dairy in schools to help close nutrient gaps. Some of our current work revolves around grab & go breakfast, smoothies, parfaits, resealable milk containers, milk dispensers, hot chocolate and more!