

Fluid milk is a required meal component for a reimbursable breakfast and lunch/supper in the CACFP. Milk is not required at snack but may be served as one of the two meal components. Fluid milk must be pasteurized and meet State and local standards. Fluid milk refers to the following varieties of pasteurized or Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk:

- fat-free (skim) milk;
- low-fat (1%) milk;
- reduced-fat (2%) milk;
- whole milk;
- lactose-free milk;
- lactose-reduced milk;
- cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk; and
- acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk.

The type (fat content) of fluid milk (whole, 2%, 1%, or skim) that may be served is indicated by age group (see *Serving Milk* in the CACFP chart on page 13). All milk must contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and must meet State and local standards for milk. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milks may be offered as options for program participants who are lactose intolerant.

Please refer to the infant meal patterns and the **“Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program”** guide for guidance on infant feeding. Breastmilk is considered an allowable fluid milk substitute for children of any age in the CACFP.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) grants a one-month transition period for children 12 months through 13 months old to ease the transition from infant formula or breastmilk to unflavored, whole milk. Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk. Breastmilk may be served to a child of any age. A medical statement is not needed during this transition period. After this transition period, between the child’s first and second birthday, unflavored, whole milk must be served. FNS recognizes that switching immediately from whole milk to low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk when a child turns 2 years old may be challenging. Therefore, unflavored whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 months to 25 months to help with the transition to fat-free (skim) milk or low-fat (1%) milk. Meals served to children 24 months to 25 months old may be reimbursable when they contain breastmilk, whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free (skim) milk, or a combination of these milk types. For more information about transitioning between milk types, please see page 6 of the **“Mealtimes with Toddlers in the CACFP”** guide. Children 2 through 5 years old must be served unflavored, fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. Children 6 years old and older and adult participants must be served unflavored or flavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

Serving Milk in the CACFP

Breastmilk may be served to a child of any age in the CACFP.

12 months through 23 months
(1 year through 1 year and 11 months)

Unflavored whole milk

Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk.

2 years through 5 years
(up to 6th birthday)

Unflavored fat-free (skim) milk

Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk

Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 and 25 months to help with the transition to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

6 years through 18 years, and adults

Unflavored or flavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk

Refer to the CACFP meal pattern on pages 9-11 for the serving size requirements by age. Program operators have the option to serve fluid milk as one of the two components of a snack; however, the other required meal component must not also be a beverage when fluid milk is served at snack. Fluid milk must be served as a beverage or on cereal, or a combination of both.

For adult participants only, 6 ounces (weight) or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (volume) of yogurt may be used to meet the equivalent of 8 fluid ounces of milk once per day.

Fluid milk used in smoothies may credit toward the fluid milk component requirement

if the smoothie contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 fluid ounces) of fluid milk per serving. Please note, with the exception of the infant meal pattern, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup is the minimum creditable amount of milk. When a smoothie contains less than the amount of milk required in the meal pattern, additional fluid milk must be offered.

Smoothies are the only example of when milk used as an ingredient in a recipe may credit toward the fluid milk component. Milk is not creditable when used as an ingredient in cooking; for example, when used to make oatmeal, bread, or muffins.

Fluid Milk Substitutes

For children or adults who cannot consume fluid milk, or who do not wish to consume milk for religious or cultural reasons, nondairy beverages may be served in place of fluid milk. Nondairy beverages must be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the nutritional standards identified in the table to the right. Nondairy beverages served to children 1 through 5 years old must be unflavored due to the higher sugar content of flavored varieties.

A parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant must provide a written request for the nondairy beverage substitute. For example, if a parent has a child who follows a vegan diet, the parent must submit a written request to the child's center or day care home asking that a soy beverage (commonly known as soy milk) be served in place of cow's milk. A medical statement is not required.

Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Nondairy Beverages

| Nutrient | Per Cup (8 fl oz) |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Calcium | 276 milligrams |
| Protein | 8 grams |
| Vitamin A | 150 micrograms RAE* |
| Vitamin D | 2.5 micrograms |
| Magnesium | 24 milligrams |
| Phosphorus | 222 milligrams |
| Potassium | 349 milligrams |
| Riboflavin | 0.44 milligrams |
| Vitamin B-12 | 1.1 micrograms |

*Retinol Activity Equivalents

A medical statement is required when, due to a disability, a program participant requests a nondairy substitution that does not meet the nutrient requirements for fluid milk substitutes as described in the above chart.



Crediting Tips for Serving Milk in the CACFP

- Fluid milk must be served at breakfast and lunch/supper meals and may be served at snack.
- The minimum creditable amount for fluid milk is ¼ cup (2 fluid ounces) per serving.
- Breastmilk may be served to a child of any age.
- After transitioning from breastmilk or iron-fortified formula, only **unflavored** milk may be served to participants under the age of 6 years.
- Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milks may be offered as options for participants who are lactose intolerant.
- Fluid milk used in smoothies may credit toward the fluid milk component requirement if a portion contains at least ¼ cup (2 fluid ounces) of fluid milk.

FLUID MILK

Use this section as a guide to identify creditable milk and products that contain creditable milk. This is NOT an all-inclusive list. Age-specific requirements for percent fat content and flavored vs. unflavored still apply.

Details in the “Additional Information” column help you to determine if the product is creditable and where to find more information.

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|--|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| A2 Milk | X | | | A2 milk only contains the A2 protein. A2 milk meets the standard of identity for milk and is creditable. |
| Breastmilk | X | | | Breastmilk may be served to a child of any age. |
| Buttermilk | | X | | Only commercially prepared buttermilk is creditable. |
| Certified Raw Milk | | | X | Regulations require the use of pasteurized milk. |
| Cultured Milk (Kefir Milk, Acidified Milk, Acidophilus Milk) | | X | | Cultured milk is a fluid milk produced by adding selected microorganisms to fluid milk under controlled conditions to produce a product with a specific flavor and/or consistency. Examples are cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk. Only commercially prepared cultured milk that meets fat standards is creditable. |
| Flavored Milks (chocolate, strawberry, etc.) | | X | | Flavored fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults. Different flavors may contain different levels of sweetener. However, as a best practice, serve flavored milks that contain no more than 10 g of added sugars per 8 fl oz. |
| Goat’s Milk | | X | | Goat’s milk must be pasteurized and meet State and local health standards for fluid milk. Only commercially prepared goat’s milk is creditable. Age-specific requirements for percent fat content and flavored vs. unflavored still apply. |

FLUID MILK

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|--|------------|-------|----|--|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Lactose-Free Milk, Lactose-Reduced Milk | X | | | Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milks are fluid milks that have been modified by the addition of lactase enzymes. The lactose (milk sugar) in this milk has been broken down into simple sugars. Children or adults who cannot digest lactose may benefit from the use of lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk. |
| Reduced-fat (2%) Milk | | X | | Unflavored reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children during the 1-month transition period between 24 months through 25 months of age. |
| Low-fat (1%) Milk | X | | | Low-fat (1%) unflavored milk is creditable when served to children 2 years through 5 years of age. Low-fat (1%) unflavored and flavored milks are creditable when served to children 6 years and older and adults. |
| Skim Milk, Nonfat Milk, Fat-free Milk | X | | | Fat-free (skim) unflavored milk is creditable when served to children 2 years and older and adults. Fat-free (skim) unflavored and flavored milks are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults. |
| UHT (Ultra High Temperature) Milk or Shelf-Stable Milk | X | | | UHT is a Grade A, pasteurized milk that has been heated to 280°F for a few seconds then cooled and packaged. UHT milk is creditable. |
| Whole Milk | | X | | Unflavored whole milk is creditable when served to children ages 12 through 23 months and during the 1-month transition period between 24 months through 25 months of age. |

FLUID MILK

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|--|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Cheese | | | X | Cheese is not creditable as fluid milk. Cheese may credit toward the meats/meat alternates component. |
| Cream | | | X | Cream is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Cream Sauces | | | X | Cream sauces are not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Cream Soups | | | X | Cream soups are not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Custard | | | X | Custard is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Eggnog | | | X | Eggnog is not creditable as fluid milk. If serving eggnog as an extra item (nonreimbursable), please note, eggnog made with uncooked eggs increases the risk for foodborne illness. |
| Evaporated Milk | | X | | Evaporated milk typically does not credit as fluid milk, however, canned evaporated milk may be creditable under certain conditions of limited fluid milk availability. Contact your State agency or your sponsoring agency for additional guidance. |

FLUID MILK

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|--|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Frozen Yogurt | | | X | Frozen yogurt is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Half and Half | | | X | Half and half is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Hot Chocolate (Cocoa) | | X | | Hot chocolate must be made with fluid milk, and only the fluid milk portion is creditable. Hot chocolate is considered a flavored milk and is not creditable in CACFP for children under 6 years of age. For children 6 years and older and adults, the milk in hot chocolate may be creditable if it meets the fat requirements. |
| Ice Cream | | | X | Ice cream is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Ice Milk | | | X | Ice milk is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Plant-based Beverages / Milks Common examples: Almond Milk Coconut Milk Hemp Milk Oat Milk Pea Milk Rice Milk Soy Milk | | X | | Plant-based beverages, such as almond or soy milk, are nondairy beverages and must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk to be creditable (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Nondairy Beverages Chart on page 14). Most commercial plant-based beverages are not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk (with the exception of most soy milks) and therefore are not reimbursable. Use of nondairy beverages that do not meet nutrient standards for fluid milk substitutes must be supported by a medical statement from a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian to be reimbursable. |
| Pudding | | | X | Pudding is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Pudding Pops | | | X | Pudding pops are not creditable as fluid milk. |

FLUID MILK

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Reconstituted Dry Milk | | X | | Reconstituted dry milk typically does not credit as fluid milk, however, it may be creditable under certain conditions of limited fluid milk availability. Contact your State agency or your sponsoring agency for additional guidance. |
| Sherbet/Sorbet | | | X | Sherbet and sorbet are not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Smoothies | | X | | The volume of fluid milk in each portion of smoothie is creditable if it contains at least ¼ cup (2 fl oz) of milk; this is the minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie. In addition, the milk must meet the fat standards for the age(s) being served and be unflavored for children younger than 6 years old. When a smoothie contains less than the amount of milk required in the meal pattern, additional fluid milk must be offered. For more information, see policy memo: <u>Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs</u> . |
| Sweetened Condensed Milk | | | X | Sweetened condensed milk is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Sour Cream | | | X | Sour cream is not creditable as fluid milk. |
| Yogurt | | X | | Yogurt is not creditable as fluid milk. However, for adults, yogurt may be substituted for fluid milk once per day. Yogurt may credit toward the meats/meat alternates component in other instances. |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT FLUID MILK

1. **Can flavored milk be served? If so, is there a sugar limit for flavored milk?**

Flavored fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks are creditable when served to children 6 years and older and adults. Flavored milk is not reimbursable when served to children under the age of 6 years old. As a best practice, serve primarily unflavored milk to all participants. If flavored milk is served to children 6 years old and older, or adults, use the Nutrition Facts label to select flavored milk with the lowest amount of added sugars; ideally one that contains no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.

2. **Can flavored powder be added to unflavored (plain) milk?**

For children under the age of 6, flavored powder may not be added to milk. Similar to adding syrup to milk, flavored powder, whether sweetened or unsweetened, turns unflavored milk into flavored milk. Flavored milk is not reimbursable when served to children under the age of 6 years old. Flavored fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks are creditable when served to children 6 years old and older and adults. Thus, for children 6 years old and older and adults, flavored powder may be added to fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks and served as part of a reimbursable meal. Flavored powder often contains added sugars. As a best practice, check how much added sugars are included in a serving of

the flavored powder and try to limit it to no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces of milk.

3. **What should I do if I cannot find/ provide fluid milk due to milk supply shortages or other emergencies?**

Program operators are expected to meet the fluid milk requirements to the greatest extent possible as milk is a critical component of the CACFP meal patterns because it provides nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of the body. However, State agencies may allow program operators experiencing milk supply shortages to serve meals during an emergency period with an alternate form of fluid milk or without fluid milk. With State agency approval, program operators may serve an alternate form of fluid milk in both temporary and continuing conditions in which fluid milk is unavailable.

Unavailability of fluid milk:

(1) Temporary. When emergency conditions prevent an institution or facility normally having a supply of milk from temporarily obtaining milk deliveries, the State agency may approve the service of breakfast, lunches, or suppers without milk during the emergency period.

(2) Continuing. When an institution or facility is unable to obtain a supply of milk on a continuing basis, the State agency may approve service of meals without

milk, provided an equivalent amount of canned, reconstituted whole dry or fat-free dry milk is used in the preparation of the components of the meal.

4. When are canned evaporated milk and reconstituted dry milk creditable for use?

Canned evaporated milk and reconstituted dry milk may be creditable under certain conditions of limited fluid milk availability. If a sufficient supply of fluid milk cannot be obtained due to unforeseen circumstances, such as in the event of a natural disaster, canned evaporated milk and reconstituted dry milk may credit as fluid milk. Check with your State agency for additional guidance.

5. Can the milk used in the preparation of products such as puddings, cream sauces, and ice cream count toward the milk requirement?

No. Milk must be served as a beverage, poured over cereal, or a combination of both to credit toward the milk requirement. Milk used as an ingredient in the preparation of recipes does not credit toward the fluid milk requirement, except for smoothies (see question #8).

6. Can lactose-free milk, lactose-reduced milk, cultured buttermilk, acidified milk, or acidophilus milk be offered without a medical statement?

Yes, lactose-free milk, lactose-reduced milk, cultured buttermilk, acidified milk, or acidophilus milk are creditable fluid

milk options and can be served without a medical statement.

7. Can milk be purchased directly from a farm?

Yes, milk purchased from a farm may be served if it is pasteurized fluid milk that meets State and local health standards. It must also include vitamins A and D and other nutrients at levels specified by the FDA.

8. Can smoothies be served to meet the milk requirements?

Yes, the volume of fluid milk in each portion of smoothie is creditable if the smoothie contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 fluid ounces) of fluid milk. In addition, the milk must meet the fat standards for the age(s) being served and be unflavored for children younger than 6 years old. When a smoothie contains less than the amount of milk required in the meal pattern, additional fluid milk must be offered. Smoothies are the only example of when milk used as an ingredient in a recipe may credit toward the fluid milk component. For more information, see the policy memo, **Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs**.

9. Why is cow's milk not permitted for infants and reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), and fat-free (skim) milk not allowed for children 1 year of age?

Breastmilk is the optimal source of nutrition for infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends

delaying the introduction of cow's milk to children until 1 year of age. Based on this recommendation, infants are required to be served breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life. Cow's milk may only be served to infants and be reimbursed if it is supported by a medical statement signed by a registered dietitian or State licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. The statement should explain how the infant's disability restricts their diet. It should also include how the disability must be accommodated, what foods or beverages should not be served, and provide recommended alternatives to serve in place of the prohibited foods.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines)* and pediatric nutrition authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommend that reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), and fat-free (skim) milk should not be fed to children younger than age 2. These milks contain insufficient amounts of fat (including linoleic acid) for children under the age of 2 years old. Based on this recommendation, children 12 through 23 months of age must be served only whole milk, unless supported by a signed medical statement. See the policy memo: **Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the CACFP, Q&As.**

Milk Substitutes

1. Is a medical statement needed to serve soy beverages (commonly known as soy milk) or any other nondairy beverages as part of a reimbursable meal?

A signed medical statement is not required for a nondairy beverage (e.g., soy milk) that is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. If the nondairy beverage meets the nutritional standards for calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, and other nutrients levels found in cow's milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Nondairy Beverages Chart on page 14), then it is creditable toward the fluid milk requirement. However, a parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant must request the nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverage in writing. If the nondairy beverage requested is not nutritionally equivalent to milk, a medical statement is then required for the beverage to credit toward the reimbursable meal.

2. If parents provide a nondairy beverage such as coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk for their child, can we count that child's meal in our reimbursable meal count?

If a parent provides a nondairy beverage that meets the nutritional standards for fluid milk substitutes/nondairy beverages (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Nondairy Beverages Chart on page 14), the CACFP provider may serve the nondairy beverage and

claim reimbursement for the meal. The provider is then responsible for supplying the remaining required meal components for the meal to be reimbursable. CACFP providers should inform parents, guardians, and adult participants about the nutrient requirements for nondairy beverages. In general, only certain soy and pea beverages meet the nutritional standards.

If a parent provides a nondairy beverage that does not meet the nutrient requirements for fluid milk substitutes/nondairy beverages, then a signed medical statement that supports the substitution is required for the meal to be reimbursable.

3. If a participant does not drink fluid milk (for example for religious or cultural reasons), can I be reimbursed for their meals?

Yes, you may be reimbursed if a participant is unable to drink milk when a written request for a nondairy beverage substitute is provided by a parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant. Nondairy beverages offered as fluid milk substitutes must

be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and provide specific levels of calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B-12. See Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Nondairy Beverages Chart on page 14 for nutrient requirements.

In the case of a dietary restriction related to a disability, an exemption to the nutrient requirements is allowed, if a signed written medical statement is provided from a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. The medical statement must be kept on file at the CACFP site.

4. Are milk substitutes required to meet the same fat requirements as fluid milk?

If a CACFP operator chooses to offer one or more nondairy beverages for nondisability reasons, fat is **not** one of the nutrients listed in regulation at **7 CFR 226.20(g)(3)** and therefore does not need to be considered when choosing a nondairy beverage for a nondisabled participant. Children under 6 years of age must be served unflavored milk substitutes.