



FLUID MILK

The CACFP regulations require that each participant's breakfast, lunch, or supper include fluid milk (milk) to be eligible for reimbursement. FNS grants a 1-month transition period for children 12 months through 13 months old to ease the transition from infant formula or breastmilk to whole milk. A medical statement is not needed during this transition period. Breastmilk is allowed at any age in the CACFP. After this transition period, between the child's first and second birthday, whole milk must be served. 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 adults must be served unflavored or flavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

In recognizing 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, FNS grants a 1-month transition period. This means that meals served to children 24 months to 25 months old that contain whole milk or reduced-fat milk (2%) may be claimed for reimbursement during this time without a medical statement.

Serving Milk in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

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.

Breastmilk is allowed at any age in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

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 through 12 years, 13 through 18 years, and adults

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

FLUID MILK

Fluid milk includes pasteurized whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, or fat-free (skim) milk, lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and goat's milk. Fluid milk must meet State or local standards for milk. In addition, fluid milk must meet fat requirements (see serving milk in the CACFP chart on page 16). All milk must contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the FDA and must be consistent with State and local standards for such milk. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milks may be offered as options for program participants who are lactose intolerant.

The breakfast meal pattern requires that a serving of fluid milk be served as a beverage or used on cereal, or used in part for each purpose. Both lunch and supper must contain a serving of fluid milk as a beverage. Refer to the CACFP meal pattern for the serving size requirements by age. Similar to breakfast, if milk is one of the two components served for a snack, it must be fluid milk served as a beverage, used on cereal, or used in part for

each purpose. Milk may not be served at snack time when juice is served as the other component.

Fluid milk used in smoothies can credit toward the fluid milk component requirement if a portion contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 fluid ounces) of fluid milk. 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 a recipe made by program operators that can credit the fluid milk in the recipe. Milk is not creditable when used in cooking for such foods as cooked cereals, bread, custards, puddings, etc.

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

Fluid Milk Substitutes

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

Children or adults who do not consume milk for religious or ethical reasons may be served a non-dairy beverage that is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. A parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant must provide a written request for the non-dairy 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/Non-Dairy Beverages

| Nutrient | Per Cup (8 fl oz) |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Calcium | 276 milligrams |
| Protein | 8 grams |
| Vitamin A | 500 International Unit |
| Vitamin D | 100 International Unit |
| Magnesium | 24 milligrams |
| Phosphorus | 222 milligrams |
| Potassium | 349 milligrams |
| Riboflavin | 0.44 milligrams |
| Vitamin B-12 | 1.1 micrograms |

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A medical statement is required when, due to a disability, a program participant requests a non-dairy substitution that does not meet the nutritional standards of cow's milk as described in the above chart.

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. For information on creditable milk commonly served in Child Nutrition Programs, see the *Food Buying Guide*.

Details in the “Additional Information” column help you to determine if the product is creditable and where to go to get more information, for example the *Food Buying Guide*.

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| A2 Milk | X | | | A2 milk only contains the A2 protein. It still meets the standard of identity for milk. |
| Breastmilk | X | | | Breastmilk is creditable at any age. |
| Buttermilk | | X | | Buttermilk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) for participants 2 years of age and older. Only commercially prepared buttermilk may be offered to program participants. |
| 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 fat-free (skim), low-fat (1%), reduced-fat (2%), or whole 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 old and older and adults. Different flavors may contain differing levels of sweetener. However, as a best practice, serve flavored milks that contain no more than 22 g of sugar per 8 fl oz. |
| Goat’s Milk | | X | | Must meet State standards for fluid milk. If goat’s milk meets State standards, then it may be served in place of cow’s milk with no additional documentation. All milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) when served to children 2 years of age or older. Unflavored and flavored fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) flavored milks are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults. |

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. Children 1 year of age must be served whole milk. Children 2 years through 5 years of age must be served only unflavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. Fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) unflavored and flavored milks are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults. |
| Reduced-fat (2%) Milk | | X | | May be served to children during the 1-month transition period between 24 months through 25 months of age or if there is a special medical need. |
| Low-fat (1%) Milk | X | | | Low-fat (1%) unflavored milk may be served to children 2 years through 5 years of age. Low-fat (1%) unflavored and flavored milks may be served to children 6 years and older and adults. |
| Skim Milk, Nonfat Milk, Fat-free Milk | X | | | Fat-free (skim) milk is creditable for children 2 years and older and adults. Flavored fat-free (skim) milk is 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. Children 2 years through 5 years of age must be served only unflavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) UHT milk. Fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) unflavored and flavored UHT milks are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults. |
| Whole Milk | | X | | Unflavored whole milk is creditable for children ages 12 through 23 months of age. Whole milk may be served to children during the 1-month transition period between 24 months through 25 months of age or if there is a special medical need. |

FLUID MILK

| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Almond Beverage (commonly known as almond milk) | | X | | Almond beverages are non-dairy beverages and must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). Use of fluid milk substitutes that do not meet nutrient standards for cow's milk must be supported by a medical statement from a State-recognized medical authority. Most commercial almond beverages are not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and are not reimbursable. |
| Cheese | | | X | Cheese cannot be credited toward the fluid milk requirement as it does not meet the definition of fluid milk. Cheese may be credited toward the meats/meat alternates component. |
| Coconut Beverage (commonly known as coconut milk) | | X | | Coconut beverages are non-dairy beverages and must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). Use of fluid milk substitutes that do not meet nutrient standards for cow's milk must be supported by a medical statement from a State-recognized medical authority. Most commercial coconut beverages are not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and are not reimbursable. |
| Cream | | | X | Cream does not meet the definition of fluid milk. It is not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i> for purchasing information. |
| Cream Sauces | | | X | Cream sauces do not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Cream Soups | | | X | Cream soups do not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Custard | | | X | Custard does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Eggnog, Commercial and Homemade | | | X | Eggnog does not meet the definition of fluid milk and does not credit. If serving eggnog as an extra item, please note, eggnog made with uncooked eggs increases the risk for foodborne illness. |

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| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|---|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Evaporated Milk | | | X | Evaporated milk does not meet the definition of fluid milk. See the Other Foods section in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i> for purchasing information. Contact your State Agency for additional guidance. |
| Frozen Yogurt | | | X | Frozen yogurt does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Half and Half | | | X | Half and half does not meet the definition of 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 (served at a higher temperature) and is not creditable in CACFP for children under 6 years of age. For older children, the milk in hot chocolate may be creditable if it meets the fat requirements. |
| Ice Cream | | | X | Ice cream does not meet the definition of fluid milk. See the Other Foods section in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i> for purchasing information. |
| Ice Milk | | | X | Ice milk does not meet the definition of fluid milk. See the Other Foods section in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i> for purchasing information. |
| Imitation Milk | | | X | Imitation milk does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Pudding | | | X | Pudding does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Pudding Pops | | | X | Pudding pops do not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Reconstituted Dry Milk | | X | | Creditable under certain conditions of limited fluid milk availability. Contact your State agency or your sponsoring agency for additional guidance. |

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| Food | Creditable | | | Additional Information |
|---|------------|-------|----|--|
| | Yes | Maybe | No | |
| Dairy Products or Milk Substitutes | | | | |
| Rice Beverage (commonly known as rice milk) | | X | | Rice beverages are non-dairy beverages and must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). Use of fluid milk substitutes that do not meet nutrient standards for cow's milk must be supported by a medical statement from a State-recognized medical authority. Most commercial rice beverages are not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and are not reimbursable. |
| Sherbet/Sorbet | | | X | Sherbet and sorbet do not meet the definition of fluid milk. See the Other Foods section in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i> for purchasing information. |
| 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. 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 the Resource Section on pages 133-135 for the CACFP policy memo on <i>Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs—Revised</i> . |
| Soy or Soybean Beverage, Fortified (commonly known as soy milk) | | X | | Fortified soy or soybean beverages are non-dairy beverages and must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). Use of fluid milk substitutes that do not meet nutrient standards for cow's milk must be supported by a medical statement from a State-recognized medical authority. |
| Sweetened Condensed Milk | | | X | Sweetened condensed milk does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Sour Cream | | | X | Sour cream does not meet the definition of fluid milk. |
| Yogurt | | X | | Yogurt does not meet the definition of 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

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 for children 6 years and older and adults. Flavored milk is not reimbursable when served to children 1 through 5 years of age. Children 2 years through 5 years of age must be served only unflavored fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

As a best practice, serve only 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 and serve flavored milk that contains no more than 22 grams of sugar per 8 fluid ounces, or the flavored milk with the lowest amount of sugar if flavored milk within this range is not available.

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

For children 1 through 5 years old, flavored milk powder may not be added to milk. Similar to syrup, flavored milk powder turns unflavored milk into flavored milk. Flavored milk cannot be part of a reimbursable meal for children ages 1 through 5 years old.

Flavored fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks are creditable for children 6 years old and older and adults. Thus, for children 6 years old and older and adults, flavored milk powder may be added to fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks and served as part of a reimbursable meal.

3. Why is reconstituted dry milk only creditable under certain situations?

Reconstituted dry milk is only creditable in situations where there is limited availability of fluid milk. For example, in certain States and U.S. territories such as Alaska, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands, if a sufficient supply of fluid milk as described cannot be obtained due to unforeseen circumstances including hurricanes or other natural disasters, “milk” shall include reconstituted or recombined milk.

Contact your State agency or your sponsoring agency for additional guidance. See Resource Section on pages 133-135 for State agency contact information.

4. 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 in order to credit toward the milk requirement.

5. Can milk be purchased directly from a farm?

Yes, as long as 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 consistent with State and local standards.

6. 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, the minimum serving size for milk, and the milk meets the fat standards. 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 a recipe made by program operators that can credit the fluid milk in the recipe. For more information on smoothies, see the Resource Section on pages 133-135 for the CACFP policy memo on *Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs—Revised*.

7. 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 licensed physician or a licensed health care professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. The statement should explain how the infant's disability restricts his/her 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.

Pediatric nutrition authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), agree 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. See CACFP memo 17-2016, *Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the CACFP, Q&As* (see the Resource Section on pages 133-135). Therefore, it is recommended that children 12 through 23 months of age be served only whole milk.

Milk Substitutes

1. **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.

2. **Do you need a medical statement to receive and serve soy beverage (commonly known as soy milk) or any other nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverages as part of a reimbursable meal?**

A signed medical statement is not required for a non-dairy beverage that is nutritionally equivalent to milk. For example, it 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/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). However, a parent/guardian must request the nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverage in writing. If the parent/guardian requests a non-dairy beverage that is not nutritionally equivalent to milk, a medical statement is then required for reimbursement.

3. **If parents provide a non-dairy beverage such as coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk for their child, can we count that child's meal in our meal count?**

If a parent provides a non-dairy beverage that meets the nutritional standards outlined in 7 CFR 226.20(g)(3), the center or day care home may serve the non-dairy 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.

Centers and day care homes should inform parents, guardians, and adult participants about the types of creditable non-dairy beverages. In general, only certain soy beverages meet the nutritional standards. If a non-dairy beverage is served that does not meet the nutrient requirements for fluid milk substitutes/non-dairy beverages (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18) and a medical statement that supports the substitution is not on file, then the meal is not reimbursable.

As a best practice, it is recommended the provider offer a reimbursable non-dairy beverage that meets the needs of the participant.



4. If a participant cannot have milk, can I be reimbursed for breakfast, lunch, or supper?

Yes, you may be reimbursed if a child or adult is unable to have milk for special dietary needs when a parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant provides a written request for a non-dairy beverage substitute. Non-dairy beverages offered as fluid milk substitutes must be nutritionally equivalent to 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/ Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18 for nutrient requirements. However, in the case of a special dietary restriction related to a disability, an exemption to the milk requirement is allowed, provided a medical statement is available from a physician or a State-recognized medical authority and kept on file at the center or day care home.

5. If a participant cannot drink milk for religious or ethical reasons, can I be reimbursed for breakfast, lunch, or supper?

Children or adults who do not consume milk for religious or ethical reasons may be served a non-dairy beverage that is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk (see Nutrient Requirements for Fluid Milk Substitutes/Non-Dairy Beverages Chart on page 18). A parent, guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant must provide a written request for the non-dairy 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 be served in place of cow's milk.