

Fuel Your Brain & Body

Grades
6–12

Dear Educator,

Good nutrition is an important part of your students' growth, learning, and lifelong health. These engaging, inquiry-based activities help students explore nutrients their bodies need for strong bones, healthy development, and overall wellness.

The activities align with the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend three daily servings of dairy within a 2,000-calorie diet and recognize milk at all fat levels as part of healthy dietary patterns. As students analyze nutrition information and food options, they'll strengthen critical-thinking skills to make their own informed food choices which can be carried into the future.

We hope that you will share this program with other teachers. Please let us know your opinion of the materials by visiting ymiclassroom.com/feedback-adai. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Dominic Kinsley, PhD
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired



More Information

usdairy.com
ymiclassroom.com/adai

Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com

Target Audience

Grades 6–12

Program Components

Available at ymiclassroom.com/adai:

- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activities in English and Spanish
- A handout for school nurses
- Curricular standards

Concepts and Skills

Nutrition
Dietary guidelines
Dairy and wellness

Analyzing data
Critical thinking
Decision making

How to Use the Program

Make photocopies of the activity sheets for each student. Students may complete the activities independently or in small groups. They will need computer access for Activity 2.

Activity 1: What's Your Dairy IQ?

Introduce the program with a quiz to help assess students' knowledge about dairy foods and nutrition. The activity challenges students to evaluate information that they might encounter online, serving as a reminder that it's important to assess information carefully.

Part 1. Pass out the activity sheet, review the instructions, and have students complete the quiz. Review the answers and share the information below with students before they do Part 2.

Part 2. Encourage students to think critically about the content that they read online. For example, is the source an influencer trying to sell a product, or a professional expert sharing valid nutrition information? Also, ask students to assess which statements are fact vs opinion.

ANSWERS: PART 1:

1. **FALSE.** One serving of milk provides 13 essential nutrients: calcium, protein, vitamin D, vitamin A, vitamin B12, riboflavin (vitamin B2), niacin (vitamin B3), pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), phosphorus, potassium, zinc, selenium, and iodine.
2. **TRUE.** The teenage years are a critical window for building strong bones and reaching peak bone mass.

3. **TRUE.** Skim milk has the fat removed, but the calcium remains. That's why skim and whole milk contain similar amounts of calcium.
4. **TRUE.** Current health guidelines include milk at all fat levels (skim, 1%, 2%, and whole) as part of healthy eating patterns. In addition to 13 essential nutrients, whole milk also provides fat that supports nutrient absorption and can help with fullness. The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act allows schools to offer whole and 2% milk to students.
5. **TRUE.** Milk provides fluids and minerals for hydration, carbohydrates to help restore energy, and high-quality protein to help refuel muscles. Chocolate milk has the best ratio (3:1) of carbohydrates and protein to refuel after exercise.
6. **FALSE.** Lactose-free milk is real dairy milk. The lactase enzyme is added to break down the sugar lactose, making it easier for people with lactose intolerance to digest.
7. **FALSE.** Most energy drinks contain little or no protein. In comparison, one 8-ounce glass of dairy milk provides 8 grams of high-quality protein.
8. **TRUE.** Milk provides key nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D, and potassium. These nutrients are often under consumed, making nutrient-rich foods especially important during the teen years.

ANSWERS: PART 2:

1. **B**; clues: "Registered dietitians and current dietary guidelines." 2. **A**; clues: "Current dietary guidelines." 3. **B**; clues: "Research shows."

Activity 2: A Tall Glass of Nutrients

Students explore milk's nutrients by researching and writing about them. Pass out the activity sheet and go over the instructions. When the students have completed Part 2, have them share their social media posts and discuss them as a class. Consider displaying them on a healthy eating bulletin board.

Activity 3: Snack Swap

Reinforce the importance of making healthy food choices by encouraging students to brainstorm nutritious snack options. Pass out the activity sheet and go over the instructions. When the students have completed the activity, invite them to share their snack swaps.

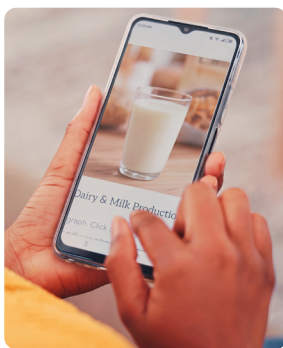


What's Your Dairy IQ?

Dairy foods, which include milk and foods made from milk such as cheese and yogurt, can be a tasty way to get nutrients your body needs to grow, stay strong, and feel your best.

PART 1

Our world is full of nutrition claims, but not all of them are accurate or reliable. If you spotted the milk-related statements below online, would you know which ones were valid? Decide whether each statement is *True* or *False*, and then write your answer on the line.



1. Milk provides 7 essential nutrients. _____
2. Teen years are an important stage for building bone strength. _____
3. Skim milk and whole milk contain similar amounts of calcium. _____
4. The 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans include whole milk as part of a healthy eating pattern. _____
5. Drinking milk after a workout helps your body refuel. _____
6. Lactose-free dairy milk is not real milk. _____
7. An energy drink provides the same 8 grams of high-quality protein as an 8-ounce glass of dairy milk. _____
8. Milk provides multiple nutrients that many teens may not get enough of in their daily diets. _____

PART 2

Use your dairy knowledge and fact-checking skills to review each pair of imaginary social media posts below. For each pair, **circle** the letter of the statement that seems factual and accurate. Then on the line, list the clues that helped you select your answer.

1. **A.** "I stopped drinking milk for two weeks and I have SO much more energy now. Seriously, everyone should try it!"
B. "Registered dietitians and current dietary guidelines point to dairy foods as sources of nutrients that support bone health."

Clues: _____

2. **A.** "Current dietary guidelines include whole milk and other full-fat dairy foods as options within a healthy eating pattern."
B. "Whole milk is obviously unhealthy because it has more fat."

Clues: _____

3. **A.** "This energy drink is literally the BEST thing for you after a workout."
B. "Research shows that milk provides fluids, carbohydrates, and high-quality protein that can help you refuel after exercise."

Clues: _____

Choose a factual statement you circled. Would you share it with others? Why or why not?



Activity 2

A Tall Glass of Nutrients

Milk and dairy foods provide nutrients that help support health and wellness.

An 8-ounce glass of milk provides 8 grams of high-quality protein, a nutrient that is essential to our bodies and helps build and repair tissues, including muscles, bones, hair, and nails. High-quality proteins are also called complete proteins because they contain all nine essential amino acids that the body cannot make on its own. Milk has two complementary types of high-quality proteins: casein and whey. Whey is digested more quickly, while casein is digested more slowly, providing amino acids to the body at different rates. Together, they help support muscle growth, repair, and recovery. What other nutrients are found in milk and dairy foods?

PART 1

Use the sources below to research the 13 essential nutrients in milk. Then complete the chart.

- 13 Ways Milk Can Help Your Body: bit.ly/4wQpSkF
- Milk Facts and Health Benefits: Is Milk Healthy? usdairy.com/dairy-nutrition/products/milk
- Understanding High-Quality Proteins: How to Choose the Best Protein Options for Your Health: usdairy.com/news-articles/what-is-high-quality-protein

PART 2

When done with the chart, use what you've learned to design a social media post featuring three nutrients in milk and explain why they are important. Showcase your favorite protein-rich dairy food, such as regular or chocolate milk, yogurt, or string cheese. Add an illustration, emojis, or an image to support your message.

Did You Know?

Essential nutrients are the vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats, and other nutrients your body needs every day because it can't produce enough of them itself.

Nutrients in milk

What does the nutrient do for the body?

1. Calcium	_____
2. Iodine	_____
3. Niacin (Vitamin B3)	_____
4. Pantothenic Acid (Vitamin B5)	_____
5. Phosphorus	_____
6. Potassium	_____
7. Protein	_____
8. Riboflavin (Vitamin B2)	_____
9. Selenium	_____
10. Vitamin A	_____
11. Vitamin B12	_____
12. Vitamin D	_____
13. Zinc	_____



Activity 3

Snack Swap

Healthy eating often depends on individual needs, preferences, and circumstances, but nutrition should always be the priority. Can you influence other teens to make nutritious food choices?

Read the social media posts below. Write an engaging reply to encourage the teen to swap their food choice for a more nutritious option that will also help them meet the recommended three daily servings of dairy as part of a healthy eating pattern. Use the ideas below or go to usdairy.com/recipes and select "Appetizer/Snack" from the dropdown menu.

Example:



Post: "There's just no time after my skincare routine to eat breakfast before school, so I grab an energy drink and I'm out the door!"



Reply: "Your skincare routine deserves a breakfast sidekick! Try a Greek yogurt with fruit or overnight oats made with milk. You'll get protein plus other essential nutrients to help fuel your morning, and you can still make it out the door on time!"



1. Post: "Lunch today: a bag of chips and a soda from the vending machine. Basically a balanced meal, right?"

Your reply: _____



2. Post: "I'm STARVING. Time for my favorite afterschool snack while I scroll socials — a pack of cookies."

Your reply: _____



3. Post: "Practice was brutal! I'm grabbing a giant slushie on the way home for hydration."

Your reply: _____



4. Post: "It's 10 p.m., I still have homework, and dinner was forever ago. Guess I'm surviving on candy until midnight."

Your reply: _____

Snack Ideas



- Greek yogurt with berries and granola
- Fruit smoothie made with milk or Greek yogurt
- String cheese with whole-grain crackers
- Cottage cheese with fruit
- Chocolate milk and a banana
- Cheese and apple slices
- Whole-grain quesadilla with cheese and beans
- Overnight oats made with milk and fruit
- Turkey-and-cheese wrap with vegetables
- Ricotta toast with fruit
- Cereal with milk and banana
- Baked potato topped with cheese

School Nurse News: Dairy, Nutrition, & Student Wellness

As a school nurse, you play an important role in supporting your students' health and wellness. Nutrition is a key part of this, especially as students navigate busy schedules, developmental changes, and, for some, inconsistent access to nutritious foods. Milk is a simple, convenient, nutrient-rich way to help nourish growing bodies, active days, and developing minds.

Dairy Means More for Kids

An 8-ounce serving of milk provides 13 essential nutrients that can help children meet their daily nutritional needs and support their overall health.

- Healthy fats and protein in milk support growth.
- Milk's nutrients help fuel learning and concentration.
- Protein in milk helps keep kids full and energized.
- Milk provides fluids and electrolytes to support hydration, making it a good choice after sports.

Milk Choice

The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 expands milk options to include whole and 2% milk at school. Offering more variety may encourage students to choose milk, helping them get the protein and other nutrients they need.



Milk & Satiety

Whether it's skim, 1%, 2%, or whole milk, all milk contains the same amount of protein which helps with satiety, or feeling full. Whole milk also contains more fat, which may also increase satiety and help students stay satisfied longer.

Put It Into Practice

You can help students connect nutrition information to real-life choices through simple activities:

- **Compare the Protein:** Have students calculate the amount of protein in their school lunch when they choose milk as their beverage compared with another beverage choice.
- **Build a Nutrient-Rich Snack:** Ask students to create a snack that pairs a dairy food, such as milk, Greek yogurt, cheese, or cottage cheese, with another nutritious food.
- **Explore the Label:** Compare Nutrition Facts labels from different milks and identify the key nutrients.
- **Track the Nutrients:** Challenge students to identify how many of milk's 13 essential nutrients they can find using a food label or nutrition resource.

For **ready-to-use activities** that help students explore dairy nutrition, evaluate health information, and make informed food choices, check out "Fuel Your Brain & Body" at ymiclassroom.com/adai.

