

PLANT-BASED MILKS

Plant-based milks – Plant-based milks generally are not recommended for children <5 years of age unless they have cow milk allergy or intolerance [41].

Common plant-based milks include soy, almond, rice, coconut, and hemp milks; newer alternative milks include quinoa, oat, potato, and mixed grain milks. Among the plant-based milks, soy milk has a nutrient profile that is most like cow milk and usually is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Other plant-based milks generally are lower in protein, calcium, vitamin D, and calories; they also may be lacking in other vitamins, minerals, and fatty acids that are found in dairy milk.

Children who drink non-cow milk or nonfortified soy milk (eg, goat milk or plant-based milks such as rice, almond, coconut, etc) may require supplemental vitamin D.

Commercially available cow milk is fortified with vitamin D; fortification of non-cow milk is voluntary. Drinking only non-cow milk is associated with decreased levels of vitamin D.

If cow milk alternatives are used for children, other foods must be chosen wisely to provide the nutrients missing from alternative milk sources. Plant-based milks also may be deficient in calcium and protein. Consultation with a dietitian to review the overall dietary nutrient intake may be warranted for children in whom plant-based milks are a dietary staple.

In addition, many of the plant-based milk have added sweeteners, which promote excessive weight gain and cavities.

If you are using plant-based milk, make sure you child is getting the appropriate amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

AGE	DAILY CALCIUM	DAILY VITAMIN D
1-3 years	700 mg	400-600 IU
4-8 years	1000 mg	600 IU
9-18 years	1300 mg	600-1000 IU