

Got Choices? A Guide to Non-Dairy Milks (For ages one year and older) Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

The popularity of alternative milks is on the rise, and so is the confusion about which option is the healthiest. Non-dairy milks are a good choice if you or your child have food allergies, food intolerances or simply prefer the taste. Read the different description of milks to find the best option for you.

Can I replace my breastmilk with cow milk?

No. Cow milk and non-dairy milks should not replace breastmilk or infant formula, and should never be given to your child if they are under the age of one.

Is cow milk unhealthy?

No. However, if you drink cow milk find a non-fat or 1% option. You get the same important nutrients as whole cow milk and can avoid the excess fat and calories. In fact, cow milk packages nutrients in a way that your body absorbs best. From an 8 oz. glass of 1% cow milk you get:

- 28% of your daily value of calcium.
- 8 grams of protein.
- Nutrients such as vitamin D and potassium.

Soy milk

Soy milk is most similar to cow milk in calories, fat and protein. Recent research suggests a moderate amount of soy has health advantages. A reasonable amount of soy seems to be 2-3 servings a day. From an 8 oz. glass of fortified soy milk you get:

- Calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12.
- 6 grams of soy protein.
- 80% less fat than whole milk.
- Isoflavones that have been shown to modestly decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.
- Few brands contain algae-derived docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which is usually found in fish oils.
- Phytates, which can make calcium less absorbable.

Soy allergies are more common in young children than adults. If you or your child has soy allergies, you should shop around for another non-dairy milk.

Goat milk

Goat milk is a limited lactose option that is very similar to whole cow milk in amount of protein, sugars, vitamins and minerals. It is also easier to digest for sensitive stomachs due to having less lactose (cow milk's natural form of sugar). From an 8 oz. glass of goat milk you get:

- More calcium than whole cow's milk
- More potassium than whole cow's milk
- 5% of your daily vitamin C.

If you or your child is allergic to cow milk, you may react to goat milk. Talk to your doctor to see if goat milk is a good option for you.

Nut and seed milks

These non-dairy milks are a lighter option to cow milk. They have less calories and fat than cow milk, vitamin D, and are sometimes fortified with B12. Some examples of nut and seed milks are:

- **Hemp-based milks.** These contain alpha-linolenic acid, which humans are able to convert to DHA. Hemp milk also contains calcium, vitamins A, D, E, B12, and has 6 grams of protein per serving.
- **Almond milks.** These contain a high amount of essential vitamins and minerals such as vitamin E, magnesium, iron, fiber, zinc and calcium.
- **Coconut milks.** Natural coconut milk is creamier and sweeter than canned coconut milk. It contains vitamins D and B12. Unless fortified, coconut milk has very little calcium and protein (about 1 gram per cup). It also contains the same amount of saturated fat as whole cow milk.

Nut and seed milks have very little protein, and many contain added sweeteners like cane or refined sugars. They are also made with a limited total amount of nuts. For instance, a cup of almond milk contains only four almonds. For a complete list of nut and seed milks visit:

http://www.vrq.org/nutrition/milk_alternatives/nut_and_seed_milk_table.pdf.

Grain milks

These milks are made from grains that have natural fiber and give the added benefit of fiber infused naturally into the milk. They are typically low in fat content, and fortified with B12. The most common types come from rice and oats. An example of grain milks and their contents include:

- **Rice milks.** These contain limited or no cholesterol, which makes this non-dairy option good for heart health, but is mainly a source of carbohydrates.

Grain milks are a good choice for you if you are vegan, or if you or your child have milk protein allergies, such as allergies to casein. However, these milks contain only 1 gram of protein, and usually rice syrup, evaporated cane juice, or some other natural sweetener. For a complete list of grain milks visit: http://www.vrq.org/nutrition/milk_alternatives/grain_milks_table.pdf.

What is “lactose”?

Lactose is milk’s natural form of sugar which enhances your calcium absorption. This means you’ll absorb more calcium from a glass of milk than you would from a supplement containing the same amount of calcium. If you are lactose-intolerant, you can still drink certain milks. Lactaid is real milk that has had the lactose removed and replaced with a different form of sugar.

What should I look for in non-dairy milks?

Look for pasteurized milks only that have higher levels of protein, lower or no added sugars, and added vitamins and minerals that compare well to cow's milk (about 30 percent daily value of calcium and 25 percent daily value of vitamin D per cup).

Who can I call if I have questions about non-dairy milks?

Call **Nutrition Services** at **303-614-1070** and ask to speak to a dietitian.

Resources

- Visit [vrq.org](http://www.vrq.org) and search “Alternative Milks.”
- Visit kphealthyme.org for more information.

Milk Nutrition Information

Nutrition information is per 8 fluid ounce serving of the original flavor.

Type	Calories	Total Fat	Sat. Fat	Protein	Calcium (mg)	Vit D (IU)	Iron (mg)	Comments: (Percents are %DV for adults)
Skim Cow's Milk	90	0	0	8	300	150	0	
Whole Cow's Milk	146	8	4.5	8	300	150	0	
Soy (Fortified)	90	3.5	0.5	6	350	150	7.2	Contains B12 (50%) 100-120kcal if sweetened
Almond (Fortified)	60	2.5	0	1	200-450	150	0.6	Contains B12 (50%), Vit E (30%) 90-120kcal sweetened
Rice (Fortified)	120	2.5	0	1	300	150	0.4	Contains B12 (25%)
Oat	130	2.5	0	4	350	100	0	No B12
Coconut (Fortified)	50	5	5	1	100	180	0.5	Contains B12 (50%)
Hemp (Living Harvest Tempt)	80	8	1	6	300	150	1.0	Contains B12 (25%), Riboflavin(20%), Phos (20%) Brand vary significantly for calories
Low-Fat Goat's Milk (Meyenberg)	89	2.5	1.5	7.5	268	100	0	Contains 500 IU Vit A.
Whole Goat's Milk (Meyenberg)	142	7	4.5	8.5	307	100	0	Contains 315 IU Vit A.

*Nutrition information is per 8 fluid ounce serving of the original flavor. Unless otherwise specified, a 2-3 brand average was used.