



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

# Food for Thought

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## *Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers*

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### **Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group**

Milk products provide protein, vitamins and minerals. Milk, yogurt and cheese are the best sources of calcium.

Any form of milk is a good calcium source. It is a good idea to choose lowfat milk products such as lowfat yogurt, buttermilk, skim milk and lowfat chocolate milk. Cheese, ice milk and ice cream also contain calcium, but have more fat and calories.

Children under the age of two should not have lowfat milk products – they need the calories.

Some other foods contain calcium, but not in such large quantity as milk products. For example, 1 ½ cups of broccoli or 6 cups of spinach equal the calcium in one cup of milk. Without some type of dairy products each day, it is very difficult to get the amount of calcium needed.

Calcium is an especially important mineral for young children. It is used by the body for building and maintaining bones and teeth.

### **Serving for a Young Child**

Children three to five years old should drink two cups of milk every day. One cup yogurt, 1-1/2 ounces hard cheese, 2 ounces processed cheese (American), 1 cup pudding made with milk or 2 cups cottage cheese counts as a cup.

### **Food Tips**

Choose skim milk and nonfat yogurt often. They are lowest in fat.

Cottage cheese is lower in calcium than most cheeses. One cup of cottage cheese is equal to a half cup of milk.

Choose high fat cheese and ice cream only occasionally. They can add a lot of fat to your diet.



### **Milk Makes Strong Bones**

The next time you have chicken for dinner, clean a chicken bone and have your children feel how hard it is. Let them feel their own bones in their fingers and arms. What do bones do? They make a framework for our body. That's why they have to be strong.

Soak the chicken bone in vinegar for several days. Explain that vinegar will take the calcium out of the bone, and it won't be strong anymore.

After a few days, feel the chicken bone. It should bend easily. That's what happens when the calcium is gone.

Remember, milk has calcium in it. That's why when we drink milk, our bones get strong.

## Family Meals for Good Health

Dinner is one of the best times for families to share daily events and get to know each other better. Meals together can also help to improve health through eating food that is more nutritious.

A recent survey found that children ate more nutritiously when eating with the family than when they ate alone. When children ate dinner with their family, they ate more vegetables, fruit and juice and less soda and fried food. The survey also found that they consume more calcium, iron, fiber and vitamins, all of which are important for children's growing bodies.

Children learn important lessons and skills during dinner. Developing good eating habits early will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

### Orange Julia

2 cups lowfat milk  
1 can (6 ounces)  
unsweetened orange  
juice concentrate  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
10 ice cubes, crushed

Place all ingredients into a blender container and mix. A refreshing, nutritious treat!

Serves 6. Nutrition Information:  
90 calories, 1/5 g fat,  
5 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium,  
16g carbohydrate

### Banana Milkshake

1 cup lowfat milk  
1 large banana, sliced

Mix milk and banana together in a blender for a delicious milkshake

Serves 2. Nutrition Information:  
110 calories, 2.5 g fat,  
10 mg cholesterol, 50 mg sodium,  
19 grams carbohydrate

### Hot Chocolate Mix

Make this mix for a quick delicious hot winter treat.



6 cups nonfat dry milk powder  
1 1/4 cups cocoa  
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar  
3 tablespoons ground cinnamon

Combine milk powder, cocoa powder, sugar and cinnamon. Mix well. Store in an airtight container.

For one serving, combine 1/3 cup mix with 3/4 cup boiling water in a cup. Stir to dissolve mixture. Optional: Top with miniature marshmallows.

27 servings. Nutrition Information  
90 calories, 0 g fat,  
0 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium,  
18 g carbohydrate

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