

flavored milk

and the school meal environment



A Colorado School District's Impact Study

Colorado's Aurora Public Schools Nutrition Director and registered dietitian Mona Martinez-Brosh piloted a program offering only white milk in two elementary schools during the entire 2010/2011 school year. She was concerned that elimination of flavored milk would lead to a decrease in milk consumption, in turn leading to students missing out on the 9 essential nutrients that milk provides.

Results

Martinez-Brosh monitored milk sales and found that white milk **decreased by 31 percent at one school and 48 percent at the other school** (see chart 1). According to Martinez-Brosh, "There was some thought that students would acquire a taste for white milk and consumption of white milk would increase. However, based on monthly milk sales patterns, white milk never exhibited a rising trend but the decline actually worsened as the school year progressed (see chart 2). Because of the steady decline, Aurora Public Schools will continue to provide fat-free chocolate milk for all school lunch meals."

As chocolate milk continues to make headlines, it's essential to understand that all milk contains nutrients important for growth and development. Milk is the number one food source of calcium, potassium and vitamin D in children's diets, providing three of the four nutrients that are often lacking.

Milk offered in schools today is either fat-free or low-fat white or fat-free flavored. Dairy companies have lowered sugar and calories, reducing added sugar by 38 percent over the last five years. On average, flavored milk contributes only 3 percent of the added sugars and 2 percent of the calories in a child's diet. In comparison, nutrient-void fruit drinks and carbonated soft drinks contribute 45 percent of added sugar and 9 percent of calories to kids' diets.

What do the studies show?

Studies show children who drink flavored milk:

1. Are not heavier
2. Get more nutrients
3. Do not consume more added sugar
4. Do not have a higher fat intake than non-milk drinkers

A national study showed eliminating flavored milk from schools resulted in a dramatic 35 percent drop in milk consumption, on average. It can be difficult and expensive to replace the nutrients lost from decreased milk intake in school meals. Additionally, schools that were in the second year of a limited- or no-flavors policy saw something even more concerning – consumption did not rebound. Students still consumed 35 percent less milk, on average, when flavored milk was not available.

Aurora kids missed 22 days of calcium due to the milk they didn't drink. Considering kids might not make the switch to white milk, is limiting fat-free flavored milk the right move to close the nutrient gap?

CHART 1

Milk Volume per Student Across the Years

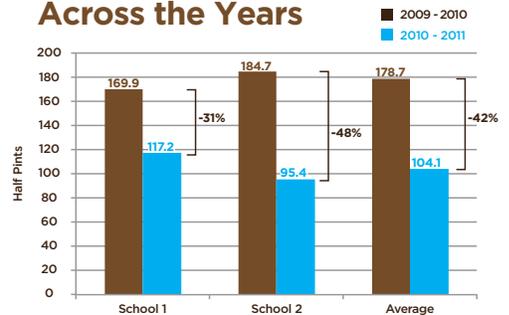
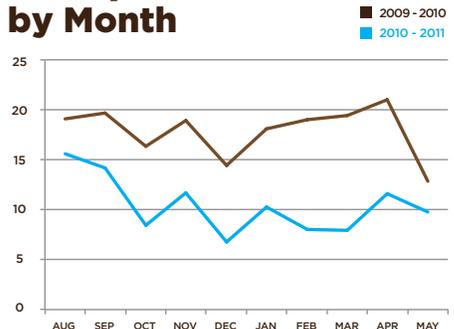


CHART 2

Milks per Student by Month



REFERENCES:

- National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2003-2006), Ages 2-18 years.
- Johnson RK, Frary C, Wang MQ. The nutritional consequences of flavored milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. J Am Diet Assoc. 2002; 102: 853-856.
- Impact on Milk Consumption & Nutrient Intakes from Eliminating Flavored Milk in Elementary Schools, Prime Consulting Group, May 2011, a joint project of the MilkProcessor Education Program, the National Dairy Council and the School Nutrition Association.