

# Choose Plain Milk, not Chocolate Milk, for your School

Children who drink chocolate milk twice a day consume about 80 grams of added sugar each week. This is more than **six pounds of sugar** per child each school year. Principals can request to offer only plain (unflavored) 1% or skim milk during school meals.

## Learn the Facts

- In New York City, 40% of elementary school children are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>
- Consuming too many calories from added sugars increases the risk of childhood obesity. Obesity can increase a child's risk for heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer throughout his or her lifetime.<sup>2</sup> It may also predispose children to chronic overeating.<sup>3</sup>
- The World Health Organization recommends that fewer than 5% of a child's daily calories come from added sugars. For a 7-year-old child that means one carton of chocolate milk accounts for half the daily limit of sugar.
- Children entering elementary school are already used to drinking plain milk, because all licensed NYC group child care centers and Head Start programs are required to serve only plain, low-fat milk to children 2 years and older.
- Children can get enough calcium from a variety of other sources found in school meals, such as cheese, yogurt, tofu, spinach and collard greens.
- Many NYC public schools have already stopped serving chocolate milk with the support of parents.

\*See back for resources.

## New York City Milk 8oz.

### Nutrition Facts

	1% Plain	Skim Plain	Skim Chocolate
Calories	110	90	120
Sugar (g)	12	12	20
Added Sugar (g)	0	0	8
Sodium (mg)	130	130	200
Protein (g)	8	8	8
Calcium (%DV)*	~30%	~30%	~30%
Vitamin D (%DV)*	25%	25%	25%

\*%DV = Percent Daily Value

Chocolate milk has more calories, sugar and sodium than plain milk, but no added health benefits.

## Choose plain milk, not chocolate.

Learn more at [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health).

**NYC**  
Health

Center for Health Equity

# 3 Steps *to* Removing Chocolate Milk *from* School Meals

1

## Meet with the SchoolFood manager.

Although USDA requires that schools serve two milk options, these options do not have to include chocolate milk. They can be 1% plain milk and skim plain milk.

**Contact the Healthy Schools Initiative if you would like help talking with the SchoolFood manager.**

2

## Write the SchoolFood manager a letter asking to remove chocolate milk from school meals.

When setting the date of removal, remember that SchoolFood managers place food orders six weeks in advance. To ensure that chocolate milk does not reappear in schools meals, submit a letter to your SchoolFood manager each year before school starts.

**Contact the Healthy Schools Initiative for a letter template.**

3

## Get the rest of your school community, including parents, on board.

Work with your School Wellness Council to adopt a school-wide healthy beverage policy and have students create a display about the health effects of sugary drinks.

**Contact the Healthy Schools Initiative to request a presentation for the PTA, teachers, parents and/or students.**

The Health Department's Center for Health Equity leads the Healthy Schools Initiative. The Center works to promote health equity and reduce health disparities in East and Central Harlem, North and Central Brooklyn and the South Bronx. As part of these efforts, they support schools in providing a healthy and equitable environment for all students through the Healthy Schools campaign.

**Contact the Healthy Schools Initiative at [healthyschools@health.nyc.gov](mailto:healthyschools@health.nyc.gov) to learn more.**

1. Estimate based on height and weight measurements of NYC public school students, grades K-8, collected annually as part of NYC FITNESSGRAM. <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/FitnessandHealth/NycFitnessgram>

2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm>

3. Wilson, J. (2000). Lunch Eating Behavior of Preschool Children: Effects of Age, Gender, and Type of Beverage Served. 2000. Physiology and Behavior, 70 (1-2), 27-33.