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## **New Research Sets Record Straight**

Long known to be a favorite among children, flavored milk gives moms something to smile about, too.

According to a study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association (JADA), children who consume flavored milk drink more milk and have higher calcium intakes than those who don't. In light of the fact that most children aren't meeting current calcium recommendations, flavored milk is another tasty and nutritious way to help ensure kids get the calcium their growing bodies need.

The study's researchers evaluated data from USDA's Continuing Survey of Food Intakes of Individuals (CSFII) to determine the typical beverage intake of 3,888 children (2,763 ages 5-11 and 1,125 ages 12-17). The results showed that children who drink flavored milk consume fewer nutrient-void soft drinks and fewer fruit drinks (those containing less than 10 percent fruit juice) than children who don't drink flavored milk.

And contrary to popular belief, the study concludes that giving kids flavored milk adds to their nutrient intake without giving them more fat and added sugars.

"While many moms may be concerned that flavored milk increases their child's added sugar intake, this study shows that flavored milk actually boosts their overall calcium intake, without increasing their total added sugar intake," said Rachel Johnson, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D., professor of nutrition at The University of Vermont and the study's lead author. "By encouraging flavored milk consumption, moms can help reverse the trend toward soft drink and fruit drink consumption, which are crowding out more nutritious beverages like milk, and negatively impacting children's diet quality."

Beverage choices can play an important role in the overall quality of a child's diet. According to a previous study by Johnson, children who included milk in their noontime meal were the only ones to achieve the recommended calcium intake for the day.

"Moms can feel good about giving their kids flavored milk such as chocolate and strawberry," said Molly Pelzer a registered dietitian with the National Dairy Council and mother of two. "Kids not only savor the flavor, but it provides them with the nutrients they need to grow healthy and build a solid bone bank."

According to government recommendations, children ages 4-8 need 800 milligrams of calcium a day, or the equivalent of about 3 glasses of milk, while children ages 9-18 need 1,300 milligrams of calcium, or the equivalent of about 4 glasses of milk. In addition to calcium, milk provides 8 essential nutrients, including vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.

Pelzer recommends the following tips to help children savor the flavor:

- Grab `N Go: Stock the fridge with single-serve containers of flavored milks. They make for convenient snacks, even when your child is on the go.
- \* Groovy Smoothie: Make a cool, refreshing smoothie by combining your child's favorite flavored milk, fruit and ice in a blender.
- \* Icy Delight: Let your child pour his or her favorite flavored milk into small paper cups. Add a popsicle stick to each cup, cover with plastic wrap and freeze for do-it-yourself popsicles.
- \* Get Creative: Invite your child's friends over for a "Mix it With Milk" party. Provide them with a variety of flavored syrups, fruits and milk and let them create their own flavors.
- For more ideas or recipes, go to [www.whymilk.com](http://www.whymilk.com)