



All About Fluid Milk

Got milk? In just three cups per day, you can meet many of your essential nutrient requirements. All dairy products are rich in calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin A, and high-quality protein. Those that are fortified – most fluid milks are – also contain an abundance of vitamin D, a vitamin found in very few foods.

What's the Difference Between Whole, Skim, 1% and 2%?

As you'll see from the chart below, the only key difference between varieties of milk is the amount of fat and calories. The more fat milk has, the more calories come with it, too.

Milks are labeled according to the percentage of fat they contain.

Whole milk (also called full-fat milk) contains all its original fat – it has about 3.5% of its weight as fat.

2% milk has 2% of its weight as fat (about 1 teaspoon in a cup of milk)

1% milk has 1% of its weight as fat (about ½ teaspoon in a cup)

Skim or non-fat milk has almost zero fat.

Many people think that 2% milk has had 98% of its fat removed, but as you can see from the explanation above, 2% milk has had almost half of its original fat removed, while 1% has had closer to three-quarters of its fat removed.

There's a misperception that 1% and non-fat milk are watered down versions of whole milk, but they actually have the same vitamins, minerals, and protein; they just have less fat. Overall, choosing non-fat and low-fat milk products can help reduce the amount of solid fat and calories you eat, while providing virtually the same nutrition.

Nutritional Comparison of Types of Milk based on Milk Fat Content

Per 1 cup milk	Non-Fat/Skim	Low-Fat	Reduced-Fat	Full-Fat / Whole
% of fat	~0%	1%	2%	3.5%
Fat	0.2g	2.4g	4.8g	8.9g
Saturated Fat	0.1g	1.5g	3.1g	5.6g
Calories	83	102	122	146
Carbohydrates	12.2g	12.2g	11.4g	11.3g
Protein	8.3g	8.2g	8.1g	8g
Calcium	299g	305g	295g	276g



Conventional or Organic?

While eating both conventional and organic dairy are healthy choices, research shows that organic dairy may unlock additional health benefits and provide higher concentrations of different nutrients than others.

For example, organic milk produced by cows that are grass-fed rather than being fed a grain-based diet, is shown to contain 62% more omega-3 fats than conventional milk. We often associate omega-3 fat with fish, but it can be in milk as well, depending on the cow's diet! Higher intake of this type of fat may reduce the risk of cardiac deaths.

So whether you choose organic or conventionally-produced dairy, you can enjoy the wonderful taste and health benefits of milk – along with cheese, yogurt, kefir and other dairy-based products.