



Toddler Milk: Healthy Choice or Marketing Ploy?

WHAT PARENT OR CAREGIVER does not want to go the extra mile to ensure that their child is healthy and well nourished? It turns out formula manufacturers are counting on it. This marketing ploy used by creators of “toddler milk” has succeeded in catching the attention of caregivers everywhere. Ads in magazines and TV commercials target parents and promote the idea that toddlers require supplementation to their diets. Young children’s typical eating behavior often includes picky eating or a narrow list of food preferences and a dislike of many vegetables. Formula companies, producing toddler milk, are turning this temporary and normal phase into a cause for concern. To address caregiver’s concerns they have marketed toddler milks as an attempt to fill the gap in any perceived nutritional deficiencies after a child transitions from breastmilk or infant formula to milk.

TODDLER MILK IS BIG BUSINESS

Breastfeeding has been on the rise in the last 20 years and infant formula manufacturers have been scrambling to make up for the loss in sales. They have cleverly and deceptively labeled toddler milk as a necessary supplement to meet a child’s milestones.



Toddler milk is the fastest growing product in the industry with sales around the world increasing from \$9.7 million in 2011 to \$16.8 million in 2015. In America, this translates to more than 40 percent of parents or caregivers purchasing these products.

WHAT’S IN THESE PRODUCTS

Toddler milks contain more sodium and less protein than the World Health Organization (WHO) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend and are made up primarily of powdered milk, corn syrup and vegetable oil. Children already consume too much added sugar from a variety of foods and sweetened beverages, even more in their “milk” isn’t advisable.

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Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



- Carbonized pea seeds found in the Near East and Switzerland date back as far as 10,000 years. Early pea varieties have been found among the ruins of Troy and in tombs of Egypt.
- The sugar snap pea is actually a hybrid of green and snow peas. Edible-pod peas were specifically bred so that the pods’ fibers go in one direction, allowing them to be chewed.
- Green peas (fresh, frozen, or canned) are among the top ten most commonly eaten vegetable by California children.
- Look for fresh green peas with firm, bright green, medium-sized pods. Put fresh peas in an open plastic bag and keep in the refrigerator for up to five days, wash just before using. For frozen or canned peas, pick low sodium varieties without butter sauces.
- Add frozen green peas to soups, casseroles and rice. Serve fresh snow and sugar snap peas with low-fat dip for a crunchy snack. Toss fresh or frozen snow and sugar snap peas with a variety of other vegetables and chicken strips or tofu for a healthy stir-fry.
- Peas are an excellent source of vitamin K. Peas are also a good source of fiber, vitamin C, vitamin A, folate and thiamin.

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FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY EATING BEHAVIORS

Experts in child health and nutrition and reputable entities like the WHO recommend that by age 2 children eat the same foods as the rest of the family. In doing so, children receive all the nutrients they need to grow up healthy and strong. A critical period for developing the foundation of healthy eating habits occurs at age 1–2 years and includes the development of preferences for healthy foods and drinks, including plain milk and unsweetened drinks for thirst. The Child and Adult Care Food Program, which follows the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, promotes the principle that nutritious food does not have to be complicated or expensive. In addition, we know that children who are exposed to a variety of foods consistently in a positive environment will grow to like and even love them. A wholesome, well-balanced diet, rich in lean proteins, healthy fats, whole grains, colorful vegetables and fruits, along with cow's milk will provide all the necessary nutrients to boost brain power and build strong bones and muscles.

TAPPING INTO PARENTS FEARS WITH MISLEADING MARKETING

Through clever marketing, an increasing number of parents are buying these products with the belief that their children will receive all the recommended daily amounts

of vitamins and minerals from the formula, consequently they may not be making good choices in introducing children to important food groups. Parents and caregivers must be made aware that toddler milk, especially if consumed daily, will add to a child's daily intake of added sugars. It may also increase their preference for sweets and reduce their appetite while having no proven benefit to their health.

A recent study, published in Cambridge Core, concluded the US Food and Drug Administration should establish a statement of identity and other labeling requirements for toddler milks, to address consumer confusion about these products. In addition, if future research confirms concerns that toddler milk claims and advertising mislead caregivers about their benefits for young children, the US Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general could take action to address these false, unfair and deceptive marketing practices.

Toddler formula does not belong to any food group, provides no added benefit when children are offered a healthy diet and are not recommended for toddler consumption. As always, if there are any dietary concerns further questions, caregivers should consult with their pediatrician or dietitian.

— *Alejandra Marín Santos*
Child Health and Nutrition Specialist

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables for Your Health

CELEBRATE NATIONAL FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES MONTH in June with these colorful and tasty foods. Fruits and vegetables provide a variety of nutrients, vitamins, minerals and fiber—while remaining naturally low in calories, fat and sodium. In addition, they lower your risk of developing certain chronic diseases—and help you maintain a healthy weight. Whether you go to a market, or enjoy growing fruits and veggies at home, enjoy any combination of these delectable delights to kick off your summer right.

Children will enjoy celebrating this special month with a variety of fruit and veggie activities sure to spark their interest in eating a larger variety than ever before.

- Place a mystery fruit or vegetable into a bag to feel the shape; then smell and guess the mystery item.
- Children can cut soft fruits such as plums, bananas, strawberries and peaches with plastic knives and combine for a friendship fruit salad.
- Create a friendship salad with vegetables by having each child wash, tear, grate, slice or chop veggies and toss with dressing.
- Throw a backyard picnic with a fully vegetarian menu and enjoy the nutritious and healthy alternative of fruits and vegetables.
- Make spinach or lettuce leaf roll-ups with egg salad or tuna salad. Use a tooth pick to hold in place.
- Squeeze citrus fruits. Look at the seeds, drink the juice and talk about the taste.
- When it comes to smoothies, there's no exact science. Whatever ingredients your heart desires—berries, banana, yogurt and milk—any combination is the correct recipe. This snack has infinite varieties.
- Start your own garden by planting a fruit tree or vegetable seeds. Enjoy the “fruits” of your labor as you dine on the freshest treats right from your own backyard.
- Cut out pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines. Break out the glue and make a collage as a group or individually.
- Puree strawberries with yogurt. Freeze in small cups with a stick for a healthy popsicle.
- List fruit and vegetables beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Find pictures of each one and paste onto a card with the corresponding letter.
- Explore the many forms of apples: fresh apple slices (red and green), applesauce, apple butter, apple juice and a baked apple. Enjoy samples with a tasting party.
- Design an “I Tried It” chart. Give each child a star for the fruits and vegetables they tried over 5 days.



Take a trip to the produce section of the grocery store or local farmer's market to find new tastes to try and have fun with fruits and veggies this June.

Healthy Pea Salad

Peas, fresh or frozen	16 ounces	Olive oil	2 Tbsp
Radishes, diced	1/3 cup	Lemon juice	1 Tbsp
Mint leaves, fresh (optional)	1/4 cup	Garlic, minced	1 tsp
Shallot, finely diced	2 Tbsp	Salt	1 1/4 tsp
Lemon zest	2 Tbsp	Pepper	1/4 tsp
		Cayenne pepper (optional)	1/8 tsp

1. If using frozen peas, allow to thaw at room temperature or by rinsing in a colander under cool water. Toss peas and radishes in a medium-sized mixing bowl.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine the remaining ingredients whisking to combine. Pour the dressing over the peas and radishes.
3. Allow the salad to sit for 2 hours in the refrigerator before serving for best flavor. Keep for up to 5 days in the refrigerator.

Yield: 6 servings

Meets requirement for Vegetable

— *The Nutrition Adventure*

Cauliflower "Mac" and Cheese

Cauliflower	1 head	Salt and pepper	to taste
Sweet onion, chopped	1	Milk	1/3 cup
Cheese, shredded (Monterey Jack, Swiss, Mozzarella, Cheddar cheese or combo of any)	4 cups	Whole wheat bread cubes (optional)	1/2 cup
Cayenne pepper (optional)	1/4 tsp		

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Grease a covered, oven-safe skillet, baking dish or Dutch oven.
2. Place a steamer insert into a saucepan and fill with water to just below the bottom of the steamer. Bring water to a boil. Cut cauliflower into large florets and steam until slightly tender, 5–6 minutes. Remove cauliflower and cool until easily handled. Break cauliflower into bite-size florets.
3. Layer one third cauliflower, onion and cheeses in prepared pan and repeat three times; season with salt and pepper. Pour milk over top. Cover baking pan. Bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes.
4. Remove cover and stir mixture. Sprinkle bread cubes over the top. Continue baking, uncovered, until top is browned, 20 to 30 minutes more. Cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for Protein/Meat alternate and Vegetable

— *Allrecipes.com*

ACTIVITY CORNER

Yoga Pose of the Month



SPHINX POSE

This beginner backbend looks like the ancient Egyptian mythical creature with a human head and lion body.

- 1 Lie on your belly, legs side by side.
- 2 Lengthen your tailbone toward your heels and lift your belly button away from the floor to protect your lower back.
- 3 Now place your elbows under your shoulders and your forearms on the floor parallel to each other. Inhale and lift your upper torso and head away from the floor into a low backbend.
- 4 Stay in the pose for five to 10 breaths, then exhale and slowly release your torso and head to the floor. Turn your head to one side, lying quietly while releasing any tension with each exhale. Can be repeated once or twice more if desired.

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Food Fun **Q.** What did the hot dog say when his friend passed him in the race?
A. Wow, I relish the fact that you've mustard the strength to ketchup to me.