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Milks for Children

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What is the best milk for children?

Water remains the main drink for children but milk is also a good choice for children from 12 months of age as it is an excellent source of protein, calcium and other nutrients.

More and more parents are choosing milk alternatives such as almond or rice milk to give to their children but are they making the best choice nutritionally for their children?

Reduced fat milks (skim milk and milk with 1-2.5% fat) are not recommended for children aged under two as the fats found in cow's milk are crucial to both infant and toddler development. From two years of age, the recommended choice is reduced fat milk.

Overall cow's milk is an excellent source of protein, calcium and other nutrients and is the best choice for a growing child over 12 months of age who is no longer on breastmilk unless there are specific medical, cultural or religious reasons.

For families choosing alternative milks for children over 12 months of age it is recommended that they choose full fat varieties of fortified soy drinks or calcium enriched rice or oat beverages. It is also recommended that they speak with a health professional to ensure their child receives all of their requirements for nutrients such as protein, calcium and vitamin B12 from alternative sources.

Tip

Give drinks in a cup (children can drink from a cup from around 6 months)

For more information refer to the **Best Milks for Children Fact Sheet** on NAQ Nutrition's Food Foundations website www.naqlld.org/category/food-foundations