

Is Dairy in the New Food Guide?

When the 2019 version of Canada's food guide was released in January, there was media buzz that "dairy is out"! The headline may get attention but it is very misleading. The reality isn't quite as sensational:

Foods from the Milk and Alternatives Food Group can now be found in the 'protein foods' grouping!

The food guide suggests we 'Have plenty of vegetables and fruit', 'Choose whole grain foods', and 'Eat protein foods'. It also encourages us to enjoy a variety of foods to eat well. This can be especially important when looking at 'protein foods'.



Do I need to include dairy from the 'protein foods'?

The nutrients found in the foods from the 'protein foods' grouping, are quite varied. They have protein in common and that is one nutrient among many that are found in those foods. One **key nutrient** found in the former Milk and Alternatives food group is **calcium** – a key building block of strong bones. Eating foods with calcium throughout our lives is important because our bones are always being broken down and rebuilt.

What are calcium-rich 'protein foods'?

Common calcium-rich 'protein foods' include:

- **dairy products** (e.g. milk, yogurt, cheese, kefir)
- **fortified soy products** (e.g. soy 'milk', tofu)
- **canned salmon or sardines** (with the bones)

What about almond 'milk'?

While nuts and seeds are 'protein foods', **almond 'milk'** and most other plant-based drinks are **low in protein**. This can be a concern if these drinks are given to young children in place of [key nutrition](#). Almond 'milk' may contain added calcium but soy 'milk' (i.e. fortified soy beverage) is the only plant-based drink found in the 'protein foods' grouping.

How do I know if I'm getting enough calcium?

Choosing dairy products can be an easy way to get enough calcium but it's not the only way. There are many other food sources of calcium. Find out if you're getting enough by checking out this [list of food sources of calcium and vitamin D](#) or try the interactive Calcium Calculator™ mobile app in the [App Store](#) or on [Google Play](#).

What else can I do?

Include foods you enjoy and choose a variety of foods. No single food provides us with all the nutrition we need.

Want to add more calcium into your day? Bring your family together to build their own bowl of muesli with this recipe:

Muesli Buffet

Ingredients

- rolled oats (not quick oats)
- cold cereal (e.g. toasted oat cereal)
- dried fruit (e.g. raisins)
- nuts/seeds (e.g. roasted sunflower seeds)
- milk, soy 'milk, and/or yogurt
- fresh or frozen fruit (e.g. frozen blueberries, chopped or grated apple)

These foods are a few ideas. Bring out any choices you enjoy!

1. Arrange bowls and spoons with each ingredient on the table
2. Allow everyone to make their own muesli from the buffet of choices on the table

Adapted from: BetterTogetherBC.ca

Read more about the new food guide here: [What's new with Canada's food guide](#)

If you have any specific questions about your child's nutrition, you can contact HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak to a registered dietitian or [email a HealthLinkBC dietitian](#).