

1% or Fat Free Skim Milk – Quick Tips for CPAs

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Changing from Whole Milk to 1% or Fat Free Skim Milk

For families used to drinking whole milk, making the switch to 1% and Fat Free Skim Milk can be challenging. You may hear the following concerns from families:

- “Whole milk is more natural.”
- “Whole milk is the vitamin D milk so it must be healthier.”
- “I won’t drink that blue, watered down skim milk so I am not buying it!”
- “Our family has always used whole milk.”
- “My child isn’t overweight, so he doesn’t need low fat milk.”

Here are some suggestions to address those concerns:

- Use open-ended questions to evaluate why a family is reluctant to change the type of milk. Does the parent have a personal preference for whole milk? Does the parent feel whole milk is better for children?
- For parents who perceive whole milk as healthier, assure them that the lower fat milks have the same nutrients as whole milk. The same amount of calcium and vitamin D for strong teeth and bones. It has protein for muscle growth. The primary difference is the amount of fat and calories.
- For parents that feel their child needs whole milk to obtain adequate calories:
 - Encourage the parents to look at a child’s overall dietary intake. How frequently is the child eating? Should the child be eating more frequently?
 - Explain the calorie difference between whole and 1% milk.
 - A child drinking two cups a milk a day will receive an additional 80 calories/day from whole milk (150 calories/cup) compared to 1% milk (110 calories/cup).
 - For children who tend to be small or need additional calories, discuss simple ways that 80 calories can be added to the child’s daily intake. Just 1 tablespoon of peanut butter will make up the calorie difference! (Make sure peanut butter is age appropriate for the child.) Some nutrient-dense ideas to increase calories include: provide 3 – 4 healthy snacks/day; offer snacks like pudding, yogurt, cheese and cooked eggs.

For parents with a personal preference for whole milk:

- Let parents know that a child can quickly adapt to a change in the type of milk. A child often will not notice the difference if the parent does not bring the change to the child’s attention!

- Make sure the milk is cold when served.
- Remind parents that most Head Start programs and schools serve 1% or skim milk. Their child may already be drinking it!
- Encourage parents to promote life-long eating habits for heart health. The saturated fat in whole milk can begin to impact a child's heart health starting at a young age, no matter the child's weight.

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