



Hot Chocolate or Sodas?

Moms have always told their children to drink milk, but in today's fast-paced world, children are not offered, or better yet, encouraged, to drink milk. Instead, good old milk is being replaced by carbonated cola beverages and diet sodas that have few, if any, nutrients, except sugar!

Let's do a quick side-by-side comparison of 12 oz. cans of soda and 8 oz. cups of milk. You be the judge on which would be better to support tooth and bone growth in children less than 18 years of age!

Nutrient ¹	2% Milk	2% Chocolate Milk	Cola	Diet cola
Calories (kcal)	122	190	136	8
Protein (g)	8.0	7.5	0.3	0.5
Fat (g)	4.8	4.8	0.1	0.1
Carbohydrate (g)	11.4	30.2	35.2	1.2
Sugars (g)	12.4	23.9	33.0	0.0
Calcium (mg)	285	272	7	12
Magnesium (mg)	27	35	0	4
Phosphorus (mg)	229	255	37	37
Sodium (mg)	100	165	15	33
Vitamin A (IU)	461	568	0	0
Vitamin E (mg)	0.1	0.1	0	0
Vitamin D (IU)	105	100	0	0
Cholesterol (mg)	20	20	0	0
Caffeine(mg)	0	0	29	50

¹ Values are from the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>

The nutrients found in either regular 2% milk or chocolate milk are essential for growing bones and teeth and are not in abundance in the cola beverages shown above. In addition to the nutrients shown in the table, milk has a number of other B vitamins such as riboflavin (24%), niacin (10%), and B-12 (13%) that provide a percentage (as shown) of the recommended daily value based on a 2000 Calorie diet. These nutrients are present in colas at amounts less than 1% of the recommended levels.

Children ages 4 to 8 years need 800 mg/d—about three glasses of milk/day. Children ages 9 to 18 years need 1300 mg/d—approximately four glasses of milk/day. It is easy to see that drinking even one carbonated beverage each day in place of one glass of milk significantly reduces calcium intake and the likelihood of putting all of the calcium required to achieve peak bone mass. Studies today have shown that children are not achieving peak bone mass in large part because of their increased consumption of carbonated beverages.

Often parents are concerned about their children consuming too many calories when consuming milk or chocolate milk. As noted, milk is an essential part of a growing child's diet and when drinking milk is part of a healthy diet, these calories are used for growth, maintenance, and repair. So when it comes to good nutrition, not all beverages contribute equally and most fall far short of the timeless goodness of good old milk, even Cup of Charlie hot cocoa made with milk!



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