



Information Regarding the Elimination of Chocolate Milk from the School Lunch Program

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is committed to creating environments that foster and promote healthy eating habits for students. In April of 2015, the Board of Education passed the New Wellness Policy, which promised to explore phasing out chocolate milk as one approach to reduce students' intake of added sugar.

Nutrition and health experts, including the World Health Organization, American Heart Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics agree that children should consume no more than six teaspoons of added sugar each day. Most children and teens consume three times this recommendation. Critics caution that removing chocolate milk may decrease children's overall milk consumption, but it is essential that multiple strategies be employed to collaboratively reduce added sugars. For a number of years Student Nutrition Services (SNS) has worked to reduce added sugars from meal programs, and eliminating chocolate milk is a logical next step.

During school year 2016-2017, SNS conducted a pilot in order to learn best practices and develop a student-centered transition plan. SNS led a tailored communication and engagement plan at five pilot sites where chocolate milk was either eliminated or reduced. During the process, SNS learned that families and school staff were receptive to the change, and that after a very short period of adjustment, most students switched to white milk without any complaints, all without a noticeable increase in milk waste. Based on these findings, **chocolate milk will no longer be offered during lunchtime at the elementary or middle school levels starting first semester of school year 2017-18.** Survey results of high school students indicated that more education and engagement is needed before removal. SNS will also conduct targeted outreach at the high school level to educate students about added sugar and further prepare them for when **chocolate milk will be removed at the high school level during second semester.**

This is one more step in creating healthy school environments, which cannot be achieved without the support of the entire school community. Let us continue to work together to make the healthy choice the easy choice for SFUSD students.

To learn more about the pilot process, the Wellness Policy, or to read the full report, visit <http://www.sfusd.edu/EatWell> or email bewell@sfusd.edu.

Phasing Out Chocolate Milk

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is chocolate milk being removed from the Lunch Program?

It is a strategy to cut down on how much added sugar students consume. While a carton of chocolate milk from SFUSD schools doesn't contain much added sugar (less than 2 teaspoons per carton), it is important to look at the big picture and consider all of the different sources of added sugar in students' diets. Simply switching from chocolate milk to white at lunchtime will cut 4 pounds of extra sugar from students' diets over the course of the school year!

2. Will this cause white milk to be wasted?

Not necessarily. Students may choose whether or not to select milk. This helps reduce waste and gives students the option to decline milk if they prefer not to drink it.

3. Won't students stop drinking milk altogether if chocolate is not available?

Chocolate milk is more popular than plain because of the sweet flavor, and realistically some students will choose to not drink milk at all if chocolate milk isn't available. However, most students will switch to white milk without complaint.

4. If students don't drink milk, then won't they miss out on important nutrients?

Milk is a convenient source of calcium, protein, and many other vitamins and minerals that are important to growth and bone health. However, milk is not the only source of these key nutrients. Other dairy products such as cheese and yogurt, as well as beans, soy, leafy greens, and even a little sunlight help to keep students healthy. All of these food items are available on school menus.

5. Are students required to take milk at lunchtime?

No. SNS offers milk with all meals, but students are not required to select milk as part of their meal.

6. What beverage options do students have?

A choice of skim milk or 1% white milk will be available at every meal period, and students always have access to water throughout the school day.

7. Does this mean students aren't allowed to bring chocolate milk in their packed lunches?

No. Families may pack chocolate milk in their student's lunch, if they wish.

8. What are some other ways to support students and help reduce added sugar?

Students say that they want to know more about the health effects of drinking sugary beverages, more fruit options, and to be provided healthy alternatives. Let's help students meet the daily goal of 6 teaspoons of sugar or less. For more information and alternative ideas to sugary drinks and sweets, visit www.sfusd.edu/EatWell.