

The Dairy Food Matrix

The foods kids eat are more than just nutrients—their entire package impacts growing bodies.¹ It's not only what's in their favorite foods, but how nutrients and non-nutrient components work together and the form they take (liquid, gel, solid). Nutrient-rich dairy foods like **milk**, **cheese** and **yogurt** at all fat levels, as part of healthy eating patterns, provide essential nutrients and key components that can help support kids' growth and development. **That's the power of the dairy food matrix.**



For illustration only, not true to structure.

Think of the dairy food matrix like a symphony, where the components work together in harmony, delivering greater health benefits than any one part alone.

LET'S EXPLORE HOW THE PHYSICAL MAKEUP AND INTERACTIONS OF THE DAIRY FOOD MATRIX CAN HELP CREATE A HARMONY THAT GROWING BRAINS, BONES AND BODIES NEED.

Consuming dairy foods, like milk, cheese and yogurt, can play a key role in baby's brain development from the first 1,000 days^{2,3}— the period from conception through age two.

One serving of milk contains 7 of the 14 nutrients recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for brain development.³

Did You Know?

BABIES' BRAINS GROW RAPIDLY — DOUBLING IN SIZE BY 12 MONTHS!^{2, 4-6}

- IODINE
- SELENIUM
- ZINC
- CHOLINE*
- HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN
- VITAMIN A
- VITAMIN B12

*An 8-ounce serving of milk provides 8% of the Daily Value for choline.

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 2. 1,000 Days. 2016
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 4. Bethlehem et al. *Nature*. 2022

5. Gilmore et al. *Nat Rev Neurosci*. 2018
 6. Knickmeyer et al. *J Neurosci*. 2008
 7. Wallace et al. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr*. 2021
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 11. USDA FoodData Central: FDC ID: 170888
 12. National Institutes of Health. 2024

Dairy foods can help provide fuel to children during their critical growth years, providing more bone-building nutrients per calorie than any other food group.⁷⁻¹² The dairy food matrix makes it easier for children's bodies to absorb these nutrients and bioactive components.¹³⁻¹⁵



Fermented dairy foods like yogurt, kefir and some cheeses can support digestive health and may lower inflammation, potentially through the powerful combination of nutrients and bioactives in the dairy food matrix.¹⁶⁻²¹

Fermented dairy foods with live and active cultures may provide the additional benefits of probiotics¹⁶

Did You Know?
70% OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM IS FOUND IN THE **GUT!**²²

Dairy foods can help kids maintain a healthy weight and may lower the risk of cardiometabolic disease, like type 2 diabetes, as a part of a healthy eating pattern.²³

HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN AND UP TO 12 OTHER ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS²⁴

KEEPS KIDS FULL AND SATISFIED²⁵

WHOLE SOME AND DELICIOUS

Find more reasons to **sing the praises of the dairy food matrix** at www.USDAairy.com

Watch our explainer video to learn more.

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