

# KNOW YOUR MILK

## IMPORTANCE OF MILK

Milk is nature's ideal food for infants and growing children. The importance of milk in our diet has been recognized since Vedic times, and all modern research has only supported and reinforced this view. In fact, milk is now considered not only desirable but essential from the time the child is born. The baby is recommended to be breast-fed until it is weaned and thereafter given cow/buffalo/goat milk till he or she reaches 12 years of age.

The National Institute of Nutrition has recommended a minimum of 300 gms daily intake of milk for children between 1-3 years of age and 250 gms for those between 10-12 years.

## MILK DEFINITION AND ITS COMPOSITION

Milk may be defined as the whole, fresh, clean, lacteal secretion obtained by complete milking of one or more healthy milch animals, excluding that obtained within 15 days before or 5 days after calving or such periods as may be necessary to render the milk practically colostrum-free and containing the minimum prescribed percentages of milk fat and milk-solids-not-fat. In India, the term 'milk', when unqualified, refers to cow or buffalo milk, or a combination thereof. Milk SNF means Milk Solids-not-Fat, comprising protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, etc in milk other than milk fat.

## ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS IN MILK

Milk is almost an ideal food. It has high nutritive value. It supplies body-building proteins, bone-forming minerals and health-giving vitamins and furnishes energy-giving lactose and milk fat. Besides supplying certain essential fatty acids, it contains the above nutrients in an easily digestible and assimilable form. All these properties make milk an important food for pregnant mothers, growing children, adolescents, adults, invalids, convalescents and patients alike.

Milk is a powerful nutrition package containing nine essential nutrients including calcium, protein and potassium. Milk is the perfect beverage for today's kids and teens.

- **Calcium:** Milk and dairy products are an important source of calcium. Apart from bone health, Calcium also plays vital role in blood clotting, nerve conduction,

muscle contraction, regulation of enzyme activity, cell membrane function and blood pressure regulation.

- **Protein:** Milk is a good source of low-cost high quality protein, which is readily digested. This protein is important for a number of bodily functions — vital to brain development and the growth of body tissues.
- **Vitamin A:** Maintains normal vision and skin. Helps regulate cell growth and integrity of the immune system.
- **Vitamin B-12:** Essential for the growth and health of the nervous system. Linked to normal activity of folic acid and is involved in blood formation.
- **Vitamin D:** Promotes the absorption of calcium and phosphorus, and influences bone mineralization, the strengthening of bones.
- **Potassium:** Regulates the body's fluid balance and blood pressure. It is also needed for muscle activity and contractions.
- **Phosphorus:** Helps generate energy in the body's cells and influences bone mineralization, the strengthening of bones.
- **Niacin:** Keeps enzymes functioning normally and helps the body process sugars and fatty acids. It is also important for the development of the nervous system.
- **Riboflavin:** Helps produce energy in the body's cells and plays a vital role in the development of the nervous system.

### Healthy Tip for You and Your Child

Drink milk to protect your bones – and your child will do what you do. The secret to success is having milk in your refrigerator. Have enough for you and your child, too.