

Chow Line

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Test dairy, nutrition IQ with MyPlate quizzes

My son, who is 11, says that since butter is made from milk, it should be counted as a dairy food. I know that it's not dairy, but can you help me explain why?

The most important nutrient we get from dairy foods is calcium. Some foods made from milk, such as cheese and yogurt, retain their calcium content, and those foods are counted along with milk as part of the dairy group.

However, there are foods made from milk that have little or no calcium. That includes butter, as well as cream, cream cheese and sour cream. These are all very high in saturated fat, which should be limited in a healthy diet. That's why they're not considered dairy foods, and they don't count toward the three cups of dairy foods that anyone who is 9 or older should eat each day. (Speaking of amounts, it's important to know that for cheese, all of these count as "one cup" of dairy: 1.5 ounces of hard cheese, 2 ounces of processed cheese, a half-cup of shredded cheese, and 2 cups of cottage cheese.)

Ice cream and frozen yogurt are counted in the dairy group, but they also can be high in calories, saturated fat and added sugars. Choosing low-fat or fat-free types would be healthier choices for dairy-based desserts.

As you explain all this to your son, you might want to challenge him to think more about the nutrients in his food. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion has just developed a set of online quizzes on the five food groups: dairy, fruit, grains, protein foods and vegetables. The 10-question quizzes are designed to be informative and fun, and could help gear up his brain cells for back-to-school activities. The true-and-false and multiple-choice questions



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include, for example:

- What nutrient can you get from eating whole fruit but usually not from fruit juice?
- What protein food is also a good source of calcium?
- About how much of the grains you eat should be whole grains?
- How much of your plate should be filled with vegetables and fruit?
- What is the name of the sugar found naturally in milk?
- What vitamin gives carrots their orange color?

The quizzes are online at choosemyplate.gov/quiz. There, you'll also find access to a broad menu of trustworthy nutrition information, including:

- Printable MyPlate Daily Checklists for different calorie levels (and an easy way to find out how many calories you should be eating each day).
- The online SuperTracker, which can help you plan and track your diet and physical activity.
- The "What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl" site, which helps you build healthy menus, browse recipes, watch how-to cooking videos and create and print your own cookbook.

The ChooseMyPlate.gov site provides a wealth of information about healthy eating at your fingertips. Bon appetit!

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Editor: This column was reviewed by Carolyn Gunther, Community Nutrition specialist for Ohio State University Extension.

Chow Line is a service of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1043, or filipic.3@osu.edu.

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