



# PLANT-BASED BEVERAGES

There are many plant-based beverages to choose from. From soy, almond, cashew, coconut, to oat, rice, hazelnut pea, and hemp! Not to mention, a variety of different blends and flavours. You may be choosing a plant-based beverage for a variety of reasons. You may follow a plant-based diet, have a milk allergy, are lactose intolerant, or are simply looking for something with a new flavour.

How do you choose the one that is best for you? Our Health Promotion Dietitians recommend starting with the Nutrition Facts Table. Look for options that are unsweetened and fortified.

- Choose beverages with calcium and vitamin D. Aim for at least 15% Daily Value for both.
- For your reference, cow's milk has about 9 grams of protein per cup (250 ml), only soy and pea beverages have protein that is similar. If the beverage you choose is lower in protein, include other sources of protein throughout the day.
- Skip the sugar! Choose unsweetened beverages to reduce added sugar.

**DIETITIAN TIP:** Most people assume that "Original" plant-based beverages do not have added sugar, but they usually do! Look for "Unsweetened" to be sure there is no added sugar.

## CHILDREN AND PLANT-BASED BEVERAGES

Plant-based beverages are not recommended as a replacement for breastmilk, homogenized (3.25 % M.F.) cow's milk, or formula for children under 2 years of age. This is because they do not have enough protein, fat or calories to help children grow during this important time. Soy beverage can be offered after age 2 as it is closest in nutrition to cow's milk. Talk to your dietitian if you are planning to give your child a plant-based beverage to be sure they are meeting their nutrient needs.

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## IN YOUR KITCHEN

Use equal amounts of plant-based beverage if replacing cow's milk in recipes. Match the flavour of the beverage to the ingredients.

- Make a creamy smoothie with coconut, soy or cashew beverage.
- Swap out cream for coconut beverage in cream soup.
- Add coconut beverage to curry dishes for a delicious flavour. Recipes that use 'coconut milk' usually refer to the type that is sold in cans. It is higher in fat than coconut beverage.
- Try unflavoured rice beverage for a mild flavour in a creamy sauce like Alfredo.
- Use cashew or hemp beverage for a nutty flavour with cereal or in baked goods.
- Make oatmeal with your favourite plant-based beverage.
- Swap your coffee cream for a plant-based choice. Try plain or a flavour such as hazelnut.



## WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

Choosing a plant-based beverage in place of or in addition to cow's milk is a personal choice. Both cow's milk and plant-based beverages can be a nutritious choice. If you choose one, be sure it is unsweetened and fortified. If you still have questions, reach out to your Health Promotion Team!

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