

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Choosing the best plant-based beverages

Someone may choose to drink plant-based beverages because of allergies, vegetarian diet, intolerance to cow milk, or cultural or personal taste preferences. These beverages look like milk and are often called “milks” but the nutrients they provide may be different.

Plant-based beverages are made from legumes, nuts, seeds and grains, such as oat, soy, coconut, cashew or almond.

Guide to choosing a plant-based beverage

With so many options, it is important to pick a plant-based beverage that meets your nutrition needs. Read the Nutrition Facts table on beverages before you buy and then select a beverage that:

- Is unsweetened or has less than 15 per cent Daily Value (less than 15 g) of sugar per one cup (250 mL).
- Has at least six grams of protein per one cup (250 mL).
- Has at least 23 per cent Daily Value of calcium per one cup (250 mL).
- Has more than 10 per cent Daily Value of vitamin D per one cup (250 mL).

Read the ingredient list to see if vitamins and minerals have been added to the drink. If they have been added, the drink has been fortified. This information usually appears on the ingredient list as “Vitamin and Mineral Blend.”

If you choose plant-based beverages, serving advice is as follows:

Children under the age of two

Plant-based beverages do not contain enough fat, calories and nutrients to help children’s brains and bodies grow and develop. Feed your child breastmilk or infant formula.

For others

- Offer two cups of a fortified plant-based beverage daily to children aged two and up.

- Older adults can meet their needs with one to two cups of a fortified plant-based beverage while also eating other protein foods as part of their diet.
- Two cups of a fortified plant-based beverage and a daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU will help meet your nutrient needs when pregnant.

In addition to selecting a nutritious plant-based beverage, choose a variety of protein foods at meals and snacks. Try beans, lentils, tofu, eggs, nuts and seed butter, fish, poultry, and lean meats.