

## *The Difference Between Cow's Milk and Plant-Based Alternatives*

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Things to consider as you make your beverage choices:

- Plant-based beverages must be fortified with nutrients they do not naturally contain. On the other hand, cow's milk is rich in nutrients such as calcium, riboflavin, phosphorus, and Vitamin B-12.
- Cow's milk contains a higher level of protein than most plant-based beverages, providing 8 grams of protein in an 8-ounce serving. Almond, cashew, coconut, and rice beverages offer little to no protein per the same size serving.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 16-24 ounces per day of plain whole milk for children beginning at age 12 months.
- Children 1-2 years of age should drink whole cow's milk.
  - For children 2-8 years, cow's milk or fortified soy milk will help support children's protein needs.
- In adults, healthy eating patterns which include dairy foods are linked to reduced risk of cardiovascular and Type 2 Diabetes.

Plant-based beverages, particularly those made from nuts, contain chemical compounds which deplete important micronutrients in the body such as magnesium, calcium, iron, and many vitamins. Nut milks also contain high levels of Omega-6 fats which, when too high, can create inflammation in the body. These issues are not present in cow's milk.