

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Dairy, centrepiece of the Kid's food table



From infancy through the teen years, children have particular nutritional needs to support their healthy growth. The culture of food they grow up in, and their food choices in the home and at school, also influence whether or not they will be lifelong healthy eaters. Unfortunately, there is probably no greater aspect of our daily lives that is more inundated by misinformation and fads than our food. In the midst of constantly changing, attention-grabbing 'trends' and the plethora of 'latest miracle foods', there's a real danger that the sensible, balanced nutritional needs of children get put on the backburner.

**The wake-up call for South African families is in our cold hard statistics which reveal a double burden of disease with persistent stunting and wasting, as well as rising child obesity. Under-nutrition, which results in stunting and wasting that have lifetime impacts, remains a significant problem in South Africa's low-income communities. The problem is, unfortunately, expected to be exacerbated by the ongoing economic impacts of Covid19. Obesity is a major health risk, predisposing us to diseases such as type 2 diabetes mellitus and hypertension. Dietary intake associated with under- or overweight impact on both the physical growth and cognitive development of children who are then unable to realise their full potential in life. Through the celebration of milk's inclusion in school nutrition programmes, the 21st World School Milk Day on 30 September 2020 is a reminder that other food and health concerns should never eclipse the need for meeting our children's needs for daily eating regimes that promote their healthy growth.**

**Maretha Vermaak, the registered dietitian at Rediscover Dairy says, "Over so many decades, scientific research has confirmed that dairy offers a unique food matrix of bio-available nutrients that supports healthy development in children. Milk, maas, yogurt and cheese offer specific diversity and versatility, so that it is easy to find dairy options for children and ensure that your family meets the recommendation of 2 to 3 portions of dairy a day."**

Scientifically sound nutritional information is essential for families and schools. This empowers them to make good food choices and prioritise the nutritional needs of children. Understanding that calcium-rich dairy plays a vital role in bone development, not only for small children but during the teen years when bone density development is accelerated, helps parents to make sure that the family gets enough of the key nutrients provided by dairy. Milk and other dairy products are not only a calcium-provider for healthy bones and teeth. It is an important source of affordable, high quality protein and is packed with vitamins and minerals such as A, B2, and B12, as well as potassium and zinc.



**World School Milk Day on 30 September 2020**

# Dairy ideas for kids

No matter their income, many South African families fall short of the recommendations for 2 to 3 servings of dairy a day. However, given the versatility of dairy, it is really easy to include it in meals, snacks and drinks.

- Add milk or maas to oats and other porridges
- Add dairy to every lunchbox – cheese wedges and cheese as sandwich filling; small yoghurts; cottage cheese and yoghurt-based dips for vegetables and crackers
- A simple toasted cheese sandwich is a firm favourite among children
- Make delicious smoothies with milk and yoghurt with fresh fruits
- Add milk or buttermilk and cheeses to scrambled eggs and omelettes
- Melted cheese topping is always a winner that goes with many savoury dishes, vegetables and bread
- Bake with milk, buttermilk and yoghurt. Top cakes and muffins with cream cheese icing to add more nutrients to your treat
- Make easy frozen yoghurt popsicles or pots for healthy treats
- Replace sweetened cold drinks with milk or milkshakes made with fruits or flavoured milk.

**Parents need to remember that when it comes to eating behaviour, they are the most powerful role models,” says Vermaak, “One of the easiest ways to ensure your kids consume enough dairy is to make sure it is available at home and for them to see you enjoying dairy too.”**

Through its [Consumer Education Project \(CEP\)](#), Rediscover Dairy partners with National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to highlight World School Milk Day. The NSNP includes dairy once a week in their school feeding programme to support South African children most vulnerable to stunting and wasting.

The CEP makes fun information and teacher resources available for Grades R to 7 at [www.dairykids.co.za](http://www.dairykids.co.za). Parents who are home-schooling due to COVID-19 can download curriculum-aligned interactive posters, worksheets, fact sheets and teaching guides.

Children learn all about the healthy eating, SA's food-based dietary guidelines, the role of dairy in healthy eating and the farm-to-table processing of dairy.

**For more dairy ideas join the RediscoverDairy Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/RediscoverDAIRY](http://www.facebook.com/RediscoverDAIRY)**

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[www.rediscoverdairy.co.za](http://www.rediscoverdairy.co.za)

**An Initiative by the Consumer Education Project of Milk SA**