



Doctor in the Kitchen®

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New Endorsement For Milk

The most scrutinized food in the world is milk. This probably is because it is the first food a baby has. And then through childhood and adulthood, milk has so much to offer.

Since we associate this food with health, with essential nourishment, it's no wonder milk's production, processing and distribution are more closely regulated than any other food. The public interest demands that it be carefully handled.

And so it is natural, too, that milk constantly is under inspection in nutrition laboratories. And it is easy to make headlines with an attack on milk, or some new hypothesis that suggests maybe it is not as good for us as we had supposed.

Balance Needed

But in a free society, one hopes news balances itself—that is, if we are exposed to an attack we also hear a defense, if a defense is proper.

Well, the American Academy of Pediatrics decided recently to react to some "sensational and alarmist" articles that have suggested milk might be bad for older infants. The Academy's Committee on Nutrition published a statement in the medical journal Pediatrics endorsing milk as a wholesome and nutritious food.

With specific reference to some expressed concern about the fat and cholesterol content of milk, the Committee said: "There is no evidence as yet that the prevalence or severity of

atherosclerosis can be diminished by limiting the intake of cholesterol early in life." As for saturated fats, a constituent of milk, the Committee said dietary restriction should be imposed only on children with a genetic cholesterol. This happens about once in every 150 live births. The Committee also found no evidence that milk in itself contributes to child obesity.

Giving children skim milk as a general practice could deprive them of needed calories, the Committee said, and "In infants and young children, the use of skimmed milk may provide an excess of protein and minerals in relation to calories."

Will Review Calcium

The Committee intends to review milk's role in meeting human calcium requirements to see if present recommendations are "above what is required for normal skeletal, dental and general growth and development."

The three health problems for which the Committee feels restrictions on milk intake are warranted are: 1) youngsters with nutritional iron deficiency (this could occur if a child drinks milk to the exclusion of other needed foods); 2) children who "won't eat" (this, too, could be too much milk instead of other foods); and 3) children who tend toward constipation.

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