

## ***PEDIATRICIANS CLEAR UP CONFUSION ON THE ROLE OF DAIRY FOODS IN CHILDREN'S DIETS***

A short article that appeared in the June 1 issue of *AAP News* clears up common misconceptions about lactose intolerance, organic milk, and flavored milk among health care professionals and patients. The authors make the following points:

- “Milk, cheese and yogurt are naturally nutrient-rich foods providing a significant amount of the dietary requirements for calcium phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, vitamins A, B and D as well as protein, which are essential for growth and development.”
- “The AAP clinical report recommends that even children with diagnosed lactose intolerance consume dairy foods to obtain enough nutrients essential for bone health. True lactose intolerance is rare, and even if present, small amounts of dairy such as low-fat milk, aged cheeses or yogurts can be consumed without developing symptoms.”
- “Soy beverages are a good source of plant protein but do not deliver the same bioavailability or nutrient package of calcium, other minerals and vitamins A, D, and B12, riboflavin and niacin found in milk.”
- “Perceived lactose intolerance sometimes can lead parents to avoid offering milk and other dairy products to infants and children. Such food myths can lead to needless dietary omissions as well as nutritional deficiencies.”
- “Currently, there is no evidence that organic food, including milk, is healthier than regular milk.”
- Flavored milks provide the same nutrient package as regular milk, though unflavored milk is lower in sugar. “However, given the importance of calcium, vitamin D and other key ingredients in the diet of children and adolescents, flavored milks could be a nice alternative since the contribution of added sugars to the overall diet of young children is minimal.”
- “The role of dairy also is highlighted in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Dairy is recognized as playing an important role in improving bone health, and some studies have demonstrated that people who consume more dairy products have better overall diets.”

The authors, Drs. Bhatia and Greer, are member and chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Committee on Nutrition, respectively. [Bhatia JJS and Greer FR, *AAP News*, 28(6), June, 2007]