

MILK CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN THE COMMUNITY

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The traditional view of milk as a nutritious foodstuff and natural part of the diet has weakened through changes in eating habits and as a result of broad brush health promotion campaigns. As a consequence consumption has been affected.

The objectives of this study were to determine the amounts and frequency of milk consumption through the community, to ascertain when milk was being consumed and to look at alternatives being chosen.

Relevant data on milk usage were extracted from three-day dietary diaries for infants (n=69), preschoolers (n=155), adolescent schoolgirls (n=48) and adults (n=183).

The mean daily intakes of milk for each of these groups are shown in the Table.

Group	Volume of milk drunk ¹ (ml)	% Distribution of milk consumed		
		Cereal	Drink	Tea/Coffee
Adults	203 (0-810) 175	27	46	27
Adolescents	209 (0-600) 198	22	74	4
Preschoolers	399 (0-795) 401	17	83	0
Infants	467 (0-1180) 399	14	87	0

¹ Mean (range) median

The volume of plain milk drunk decreased markedly with age whereas the volume consumed with cereal was constant for all ages. Adult and teenagers infrequently drank plain milk at meals which was not a popular time for consumption of flavoured milk by any group.

The variation in drinks competing with milk for different age groups is of interest. With infants, milk dominates with the major alternatives of juice and water. By preschool age, milk comprises less than 50% of drinks with the major alternatives being cordial, juice and water. For teenage girls water is most popular and for adults coffee and tea dominate with alcohol the next choice.

The low consumption of milk as a drink by adults provides an avenue for increasing consumption by improving marketing procedures. Of concern is the low consumption of milk products by adolescent girls where 55 percent are consuming a maximum of 220ml per day which will supply less than a quarter of the daily calcium requirement.

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