

## Does Low Fat Milk Have Added Sugar?

*Have you ever heard or read that skim milk contains more sugar than regular full cream milk? Perhaps you've avoided skim milk for this reason, or have wondered which type of milk is the healthiest choice. Keep reading to find out why this myth is just another nutrition urban legend...*



Flavoured milk has a staggering amount of sugar added to it. If you've completed our Level 3 facilitator training, or run our sugar in drinks flip card activity and display, you'll know that a 500mL bottle of chocolate milk contains 44g sugar, i.e. 11 teaspoons of sugar. That's almost as much as a same amount of Coca-Cola! While we know to be aware of sugar in our drinks and avoid sugar sweetened beverages, you might be wondering – where does plain milk fit in the equation?

While flavoured milks can contain around 30 per cent sugar (including added sugars), regular full-fat milk has much less, at just under 5 per cent. However, you may have heard that reduced fat milk should be avoided, as it contains more sugar than whole milk. **This is a myth.**

Plain, reduced fat milks do not contain any added sugar. In fact, when you compare the sugar content per 100mL between skim, light and regular milk, the difference is negligible, with 5g vs 4.8g vs 4.7g respectively. That's only an average difference of 0.3 grams between skim and whole milk!

So where has this myth come from? All plain milk, including regular and reduced fat, contains just one ingredient – milk. This can be observed by reading the nutrition information panel of the product and looking at the ingredients list. The sugar that is found in all types of plain milk is naturally occurring, and is called lactose. When the fat is removed from whole milk to create skim and light varieties, what you're left with is a more concentrated source of everything else. This includes more protein, more water, more nutrients (such as calcium), as well as more lactose.

Like the sugar that is naturally found in fruit, the low amount of sugar that is naturally present in milk is nothing to stress about. What we really need to keep an eye out for are added sugars, which are added during processing by the food manufacturer. This brings us back to the fourth Country Kitchens key message – be aware of sugar in your drinks. Water and plain milk are always the best choice when it comes to drinks!

So remember – the reason reduced fat plain milks are (very slightly) higher in sugar *isn't* because extra sugar is added to them. It's just a matter of basic mathematics: when you remove one thing, the proportion of everything left naturally rises.

For more information, visit [qcwacountrykitchens.com.au](http://qcwacountrykitchens.com.au)

