

Potatoes: A Go Food for Kids!



Potatoes provide a nutritional powerhouse for children.

- Potatoes deliver two of the four nutrients of concern for children – potassium and fiber. Failure to increase potassium and fiber in children’s diets can have serious long-term health consequences.
- Children actually eat potatoes, even if they do not eat other vegetables. As the only vegetable consumed at breakfast, and the vegetable most often consumed at lunch, potatoes provide children with valuable nutrients throughout the day.
- Potatoes may help protect bone health in a more effective manner than other potassium sources.



Bottom Line

Science demonstrates that removal or significant reduction of potato consumption may put many children at a significant risk of decreased nutrient intake. This is due to the fact that potatoes contain two of the four nutrients needed most, perhaps in a more beneficial form, and certainly in a product that children *actually* consume.



* Data are for French fries, whole potatoes provide 792 mg K and 3.3 g fiber

Potatoes serve up affordable nutrition for schools.

-  One serving of potatoes delivers 13 percent of a child's daily potassium needs for less than 5 cents.
-  Because kids actually eat them, potatoes do not waste schools' dollars.

Bottom Line

The IOM identified that its recommendations would impose significant costs to schools – estimations of an increase of 23 percent in breakfast and 9 percent in lunch costs in some situations (IOM School Meals Report, pg. 142). Most school food services are not in the financial position to incur that kind of cost. While child nutrition reauthorization legislation does increase the reimbursement rate – that may or may not pass, and even if it does, that money will hardly cover inflation. What the IOM is recommending will have the unintended consequence of taking nutritious food out of the children's mouths, replacing with foods that are difficult to afford and may end up in the garbage.



The Truth – Today's potatoes are not the school fries you remember.

- 🍟 Students today are consuming more potatoes that are baked or boiled – not fried.



Bottom Line

The US Potato industry understands that we need to meet consumer needs, and also grow a product that is healthy and positively contributes to children's health and nutrition. As a result, the industry has worked hard to eliminate *trans* fats, change the oils in which potatoes are prepared, reduce saturated fats, reduce sodium, and to improve the healthfulness of potatoes – a vegetable that people like to eat.

Bottom Line

Potatoes constitute an integral part of providing nutritious school lunches to our nation's children. Recommendations to limit their use, while likely well-intentioned, is misguided, not supported by science, and will likely have serious unintended consequences. Potatoes hold unique benefits for school lunches, most notably nutrient content and affordability. Today's potato products are not the school fries you remember – many of the former less-healthy aspects have been eliminated.

