

# HOW MOTHERS FEEL ABOUT THE MILK-DRINKING HABITS OF THEIR TEENAGE DAUGHTERS



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HOW MOTHERS FEEL ABOUT THE MILK DRINKING HABITS  
OF THEIR TEENAGE DAUGHTERS <sup>1/</sup>

By MILDRED R. WIGHTMAN <sup>2/</sup>

In this country of great abundance, the average American teenage girl lives on a poor diet--one only slightly better than that in many of the world's underprivileged areas.

She has the least adequate diet of any member of her family.

WHY?

1. Her teen years are an emotionally trying period.
2. Regular eating habits at home often give way to snacks with the crowd.
3. She may skip breakfast and replace it by a mid-morning snack of potato chips and "coke" or other soft drink.
4. She may slight the evening meal because of a similar afternoon snack and then eat more of the same "empty calories" during the evening.
5. Her milk consumption decreases at this time.

A Louisville study of teenage girls showed that:

- 14 percent drank no milk.
- 16 percent drank milk at 1 meal.
- 27 percent drank milk at 2 meals.
- 43 percent drank milk at 3 meals.

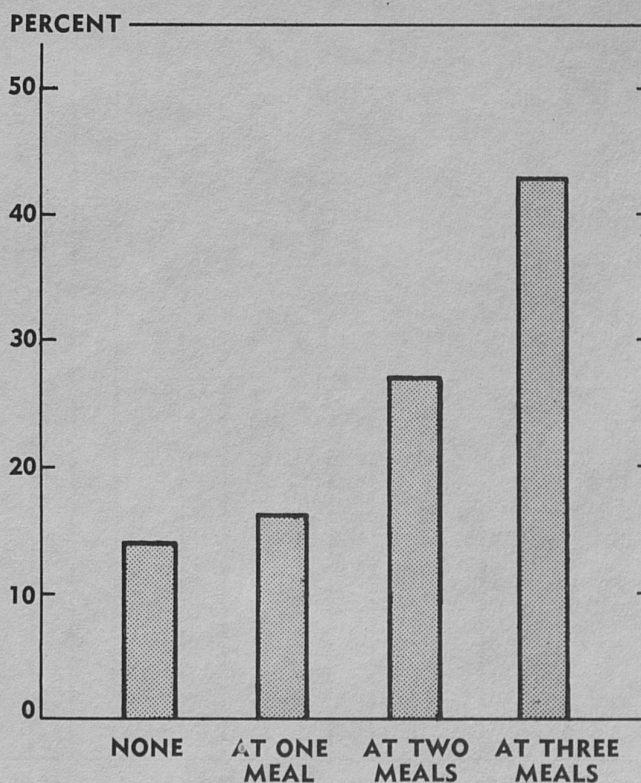


FIG. 1 -- MILK DRINKING FREQUENCY OF TEENAGE GIRLS.

<sup>1/</sup> Department of Agricultural Economics and School of Home Economics, cooperating. This report is a contribution to Southern Regional Research Project SM-13R, "Why Consumers Select Specified Foods." Data were collected from 572 families in Louisville, Ky. in the spring of 1958. Families with teenage daughters were singled out for special analysis. Ninety-four girls from 77 families were included in the study.

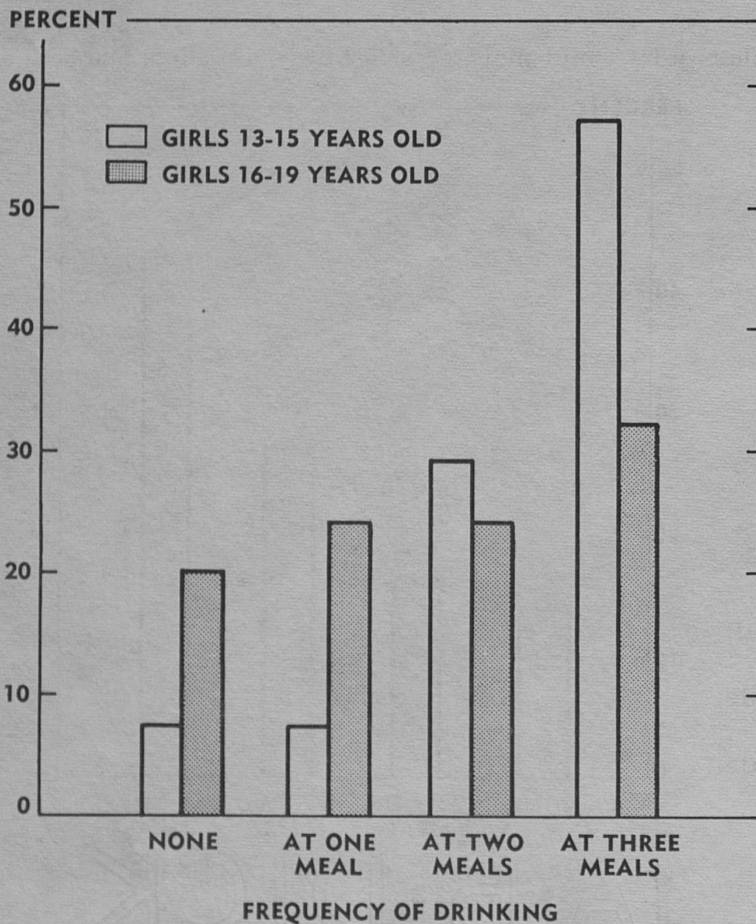
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IN BRIEF, WHAT DO MOTHERS THINK ABOUT THE MILK-DRINKING HABITS OF THEIR TEENAGE DAUGHTERS?

1. Seventy-five percent feel that their daughters need milk just as much after they start to high school as they did before.
2. Eighty-nine percent think that "you never outgrow your need for milk."
3. Seventy-one percent think that three glasses a day is about the right amount of milk for an adult.

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE MOTHERS' AND DAUGHTERS' ATTITUDES AND HABITS TOWARD MILK DRINKING PROBLEMS ARE:



1. The girl's age.  
As she grew older, she drank less milk (Fig. 2).
2. The mother's education.  
Girls whose mothers had grade school education only drank milk least frequently. Those whose mothers had gone to college drank milk most frequently (Fig. 3).
3. The mother's background (rural or urban).  
Girls whose mothers came from an urban area drank milk more frequently than did those whose mothers were from a rural area (Fig. 4).

FIG. 2. -- RELATIONSHIP OF A GIRL'S AGE TO THE FREQUENCY OF HER DRINKING MILK.

FIG. 3. -- RELATIONSHIP OF THE MOTHER'S EDUCATION TO THE FREQUENCY OF HER DAUGHTER'S MILK DRINKING.

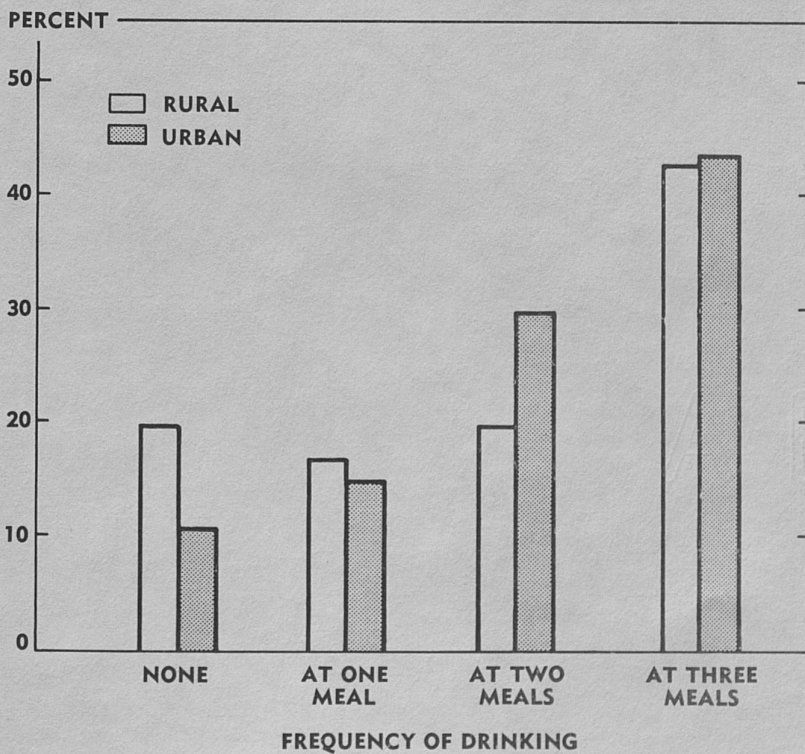
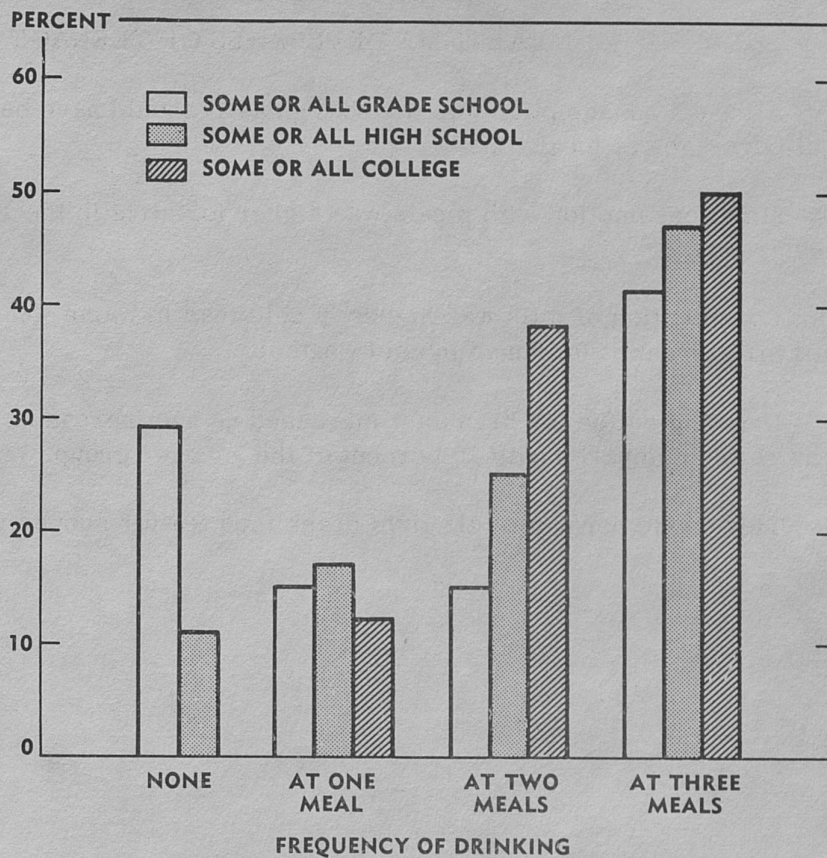


FIG. 4. -- RELATIONSHIP OF MOTHER'S BACKGROUND (RURAL OR URBAN) TO THE FREQUENCY OF HER DAUGHTER'S MILK DRINKING.

## MEAL-TIME BEVERAGES OF TEENAGE GIRLS

Although consumption was not so high as it should have been, milk was the most popular of all beverages at meal time.

Milk consumption with meals was higher for girls in the 13 to 15 age group than for the older group.

Consumption of milk was higher in cold than in warm weather. Seventy-one percent of all girls drank it for lunch in cold weather.

Drinking coffee for breakfast increased as age increased: 20 percent of all older girls drank coffee compared with 10 percent of the younger group.

Thirty-one percent of all girls drank iced tea for supper in warm weather.

	Breakfast				Lunch				Evening meal					
	13-15 yrs. 44 girls		16-19 yrs. 50 girls		13-15 yrs. 44 girls		16-19 yrs. 50 girls		13-15 yrs. 44 girls		16-19 yrs. 50 girls		All 94 girls	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	

WARM WEATHER

Milk	71	52	61	75	50	62	52	38	45
Coffee	9	20	15	--	4	2	--	4	2
Tea	2	4	3	--	4	2	30	32	31
Fruit--Vegetable Juice	12	16	14	--	2	1	2	2	2
Soft Drink	2	--	1	11	12	12	11	10	10
Nothing	4	8	6	14	28	21	5	14	10

COLD WEATHER

Milk	71	56	63	84	60	71	82	52	66
Coffee	11	20	16	--	4	2	--	10	5
Tea	2	2	2	--	--	--	--	12	7
Fruit--Vegetable Juice	9	14	12	--	--	--	--	2	1
Soft Drink	--	--	--	2	8	5	12	10	10
Nothing	7	8	7	14	28	22	6	14	11

## SNACK-TIME BEVERAGES OF TEENAGE GIRLS

Older teenagers (16-19 years) chose soft drinks more often than milk for both afternoon and evening snacks, regardless of the season.

The 13 to 15 age group chose milk more often than soft drinks for snacks at all times.

Milk was more popular for an evening than for an afternoon snack with all girls.



GIRLS' CHOICE OF BEVERAGE WITH SNACKS

	Afternoon			Evening		
	13-15 yrs. 44 girls	16-19 yrs. 50 girls	All 94 girls	13-15 yrs. 44 girls	16-19 yrs. 50 girls	All 94 girls
	%	%	%	%	%	%

**WARM WEATHER**

Milk	20	6	13	32	18	25
Coffee	--	2	1	--	6	3
Tea	--	2	1	--	2	1
Fruit-Vegetable Juice	5	2	3	5	4	4
Soft Drink	13	18	16	29	38	34
Nothing	62	70	66	34	32	33

**COLD WEATHER**

Milk	23	10	16	32	20	26
Coffee	--	2	1	--	6	3
Tea	2	2	2	--	2	1
Fruit-Vegetable Juice	2	2	2	7	4	5
Soft Drink	7	16	12	27	38	33
Nothing	66	68	67	34	30	32

### WHY DRINK MILK INSTEAD OF SOFT DRINKS?

Mothers were asked how they would encourage their daughters to drink milk instead of soft drinks:

38 percent would mention that milk contributes to her good looks, trim figure, good nutrition and general health.

16 percent would mention that the calcium in milk builds strong bones and teeth.

15 percent would say that milk contributes to a smooth, clear complexion.

4 percent would tell her that they object to her drinking soft drinks.

27 percent did not know or gave no answer.

### MOTHERS' IDEAS OF WHY THEIR DAUGHTERS CHOOSE SOFT DRINKS INSTEAD OF MILK

When mothers were asked why they thought their daughters drank soft drinks instead of milk:

34 percent thought it was because they wanted to show independence, keep up with the crowd and be socially accepted, and presumably a soft drink has more social prestige than a glass of milk.

16 percent thought it was because they liked soft drinks better.

15 percent thought it was a habit.

10 percent thought it was because soft drinks were cheaper, easier to get, and sometimes milk was not available.

4 percent thought it was because soft drinks were not served often enough at home, and therefore they chose them when they were away.

21 percent did not know or gave no answer.

## HOW TO PROVIDE FOR DAUGHTERS' MILK NEEDS

Here are mothers' suggestions for providing for their daughters' milk needs if they do not drink milk:

(Some mothers gave more than one suggestion. Thus, percentages do not total 100)

Use it in prepared dishes (no dish specifically named) -----	40%
Use it in puddings and custards -----	27%
Use cheese -----	18%
Use flavored milk -----	17%
Use cream soups -----	14%
Use creamed vegetables -----	14%
Use milk sauces and gravies -----	7%
Serve ice cream -----	6%
Serve milk with cereal -----	5%
Use vitamin and calcium supplements -----	4%
Don't know and no answer -----	16%

### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INCREASE TEENAGE GIRLS' USE OF MILK

1. Emphasize the idea that milk is not merely a food for growth, but one that is needed throughout life.
2. Stress the idea that milk contributes to health and vigor and is no more fattening than other moderate calorie foods.
3. Glamourize milk as an appropriate drink for snacks and social occasions, such as on a date, a school club meeting, or with a meal away from home.
4. Have milk readily available in vending machines and at a popular price and many teenagers probably would continue to choose it instead of shifting to soft drinks and/or coffee.