

## The Not So Sweet Truth About Kids Yogurt

Is yogurt a healthy snack or just a disguised treat that is no better than candy? The short answer is, it depends on what type you choose. If you buy the plain low-fat version, it is a healthy snack: but who does that really? Most of us buy fruit yogurt or other sweetened yogurt. I certainly never see children sitting down to plain yogurt. They either are sucking on the yogurt sticks or mixing the yogurt that has candy or crushed cookies on top.

Here is what is healthy about yogurt: it is a great source of protein; it is also a great source of calcium that kids need for their growing bones; the live active bacteria in yogurt is very beneficial for bowel health and maybe even help your child's mood. What can turn the healthiest of yogurts into a product that is unhealthy is the amount of sugar that is added to it, along with artificial sweeteners, colors and flavors. Luckily, most kid branded yogurt is free of artificial colors and flavors.

Here is the skinny on yogurts:

- The way Greek yogurt is made makes it a superior yogurt; you get double the protein and about half the sugar but you need to stick to the low fat versions. Greek yogurt also has less lactose.
- Regular plain yogurt has sugar but it comes from lactose, which is not a concern unless your child is lactose intolerant.
- There about 12 grams of "sugar" from lactose in 8 oz of yogurt. You do not need to worry about that.
- Do not buy light versions of yogurt as they have artificial sweeteners in them (acesulfame potassium, aspartame, nutrasweet)
- The second ingredient in each of these yogurts is sugar
- 4 grams of sugar equals 1 teaspoon
- Sugar in the tables below includes added sugar, the lactose in milk, and fruit juice concentrate and fruit.

Type	Serving Size/Calories	Protein	Sugar per ounce of yogurt	Other * all have no artificial colors or flavors
Chobani Champions Tube	2.25 oz/ 70calories	5	3.6g	Made from milk without growth hormone
Yoplait GoGurt	2.25 oz/ 60 calories	2	4g	
Yoplait Simply GoGurt	2.25 oz/ 70 calories	2	4.4g	
Yoplait Protein	2.25 oz/	5	3.6g	

GoGurt	60 calories			
Stonyfield Squeezers	2 oz/ 60 calories		4.5g	Organic, no GMO, no growth hormone

BOTTOM LINE: Chobani is the winner. If you do not care about growth hormones, than Yoplait Protein is another option.

### Small Yogurt Cups

Type	Serving Size	Protein	Sugar per ounce of yogurt	Other * all have no artificial colors or flavors
Stonyfield YoBaby	4 oz/100 kcal	4g	3g	Organic. No growth hormone
Stonyfield YoToddler	4 oz/100kcal	3g	3g	
Stonyfield YoKids	4oz/ 80 kcal	4g	3.3g	
Yoplait Kids	3 oz	2g	3g	
Chobani Bites	3.5 oz /100 kcal	8g	3.4g	No growth hormone
Activia (4 oz)	110-120 kcal	4g	4.5g	*Artificial Sweetener
Activia Light (4 oz)*	60 kcal	4g	1.8g	
Activia Harvest (4 oz)	110 kcal	4g	3.8g	
Activia Greek (4oz)	130 kcal	12g	4.6g	

BOTTOM LINE: In milk there is about 1.5grams of lactose sugar per ounce. Ounce for ounce you are looking at 3 grams of sugar per ounce of yogurt for the first 3 brands. Activia has more like 4 to 4 ½ grams of sugar per ounce unless you chose the light variety with artificial sweeteners, which I do not recommend. I would recommend the Stonyfield or Chobani over the others from a 'no growth hormone added' perspective.

### Yogurt Drinks

Type	Serving Size	Protein	Sugar per ounce of yogurt	Other * all have no artificial colors or flavors
Stonyfield YoKids Smoothies	3.1 oz/80 kcal	3g	4.2g	Organic. No growth hormone

Dannon Danimals	3.1oz/70 kcal	2g	4.5g	
Dole Shakers	4oz/90 kcal	3g	3.3g	

BOTTOM LINE: Dole Shakers have much less sugar than Danimals or Yokids.

**CONCLUSION** Are kids tube-yogurts healthy? In 2 ½ or 2 oz of yogurt (about ¼ cup), there are 1 to 1 ½ teaspoons of added sugar, 2-5 grams of protein and about 10% vitamin D and calcium. I think you can provide a snack that doesn't have as its second ingredient SUGAR. Why do you think kids gobble it up? Because of the calcium, protein and live active cultures? No, they gobble it up because it tastes like candy.

Your best bet is to get your baby and older child accustomed to plain yogurt and add your own fruit. You can even add 1 teaspoon of maple syrup or honey too. Anything that has as its 2<sup>nd</sup> ingredient "added sugar" is not a healthy snack in my book. To put it in perspective; the best sweetened variety (has the lowest sugar) is the adult yogurt, Fage's fruit yogurt; they have 2 teaspoons of added sugar in the 5.3 oz container. If your child had one a day that would equal 15 cups of added sugar a year.