

Use Half-And-Half for Skim Milk Transition

A couple of weeks ago I suggested the temporary addition of *fat-free half-and-half* to skim or 1% milk when transitioning the family to a lower fat milk from whole milk. The purpose is to increase the “mouth feel” of the milk—to make you (or your kids) think you’re drinking the higher fat milk.

This idea inspired some questions. The obvious one is **how can half-and-half be fat-free** when by definition it’s half milk and half cream? I looked it up. The FDA’s Federal Regulations say that half-and-half consists of milk and cream which contains between 10.5 and 18% milk fat. There are several optional ingredients including emulsifiers, stabilizers and sweeteners.

So how can it be fat-free? According to the Land O’Lakes website, there is a FDA regulation (in an effort to promote and facilitate healthier food) that allows manufactures to modify a standardized food to meet a nutrient content claim. In the case of fat-free half-and-half, they are using less cream and nonfat milk/skim in the place of whole milk. Like the original regulation, they are allowed to add other ingredients that improve texture, flavor and appearance.

Comparing the Nutrition Facts labels, you’ll note two tablespoons of regular half-and-half has 40 calories with 3 grams of fat and 1 gram of carbohydrates. The fat-free version of half-and-half contains just is 20 calories, 0 fat and 3 grams of carbohydrates for the same two tablespoon serving. The ingredients show that the cream has been replaced by corn syrup as the second ingredient. Folks that love cream (or half-and-half) in their coffee need to make their own decision between the two products. I know it’s not the same.....but how about using plain skim milk?

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Transition skim milk recipe:

- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 tablespoon fat-free half and half

Use the addition of fat-free half-and-half to skim milk just like you you are adding it to coffee: one or two tablespoons per cup. You can also make one or two quarts in advance with the same ratio. As with all dairy products, keep refrigerated.

Here is a comparison for one year, keeping in mind most people are supposed to have 3 glasses per day:

- 1 cup whole milk: 150 calories, 8 grams fat, 5 grams saturated fat
- 1 cup skim milk: 83 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat
- Savings for switch for a whole year X 3 cups per day: 73,365 calories, 8760 grams fat, 5475 g saturated fat per year!!

Here are more uses for fat-free half and half (besides using it as a coffee creamer):

- [Cream soup](#)