

Nutritional Comparison of Drink Supplements vs. Food

The chart below was devised to compare three nutritional drink supplements as well as showcase a convenient “real food” counterpart—low-fat yogurt and an orange.

	Boost®	Ensure®	Carnation® Instant Breakfast Essentials™ Ready-to-Drink	Low-fat Yogurt + Orange
Serving Size	8 ounces	8 ounces	11 ounces	8 ounce yogurt + medium orange
Calories	240	220	250	206
Carbohydrate	33g	41g	34g	31g
Protein	15g	9g	14g	12g
Fat	6g	6g	5g	3.5g
Calcium	300g	300g	500g	467g
Fiber	0g	3g	0g	3g
Vitamin C	60mg	30mg	30mg	71mg
1st two Ingredients	water, corn syrup solids	water, corn syrup	non-fat milk, water	low-fat milk, milk solids (from the yogurt)
Cost	\$2.05*	\$1.16*	\$1.12*	\$1.00*
TASTE Best = 1 to Worst = 5	3	4	2	1

*Prices based on an Illinois grocery store in 2009. Prices in your area may differ. All samples tested were vanilla flavored.

The products are not hugely different in their calorie, carbohydrate or fat content. Of the supplements, Carnation® Instant Breakfast Essentials™ has the lowest fat and the most calcium.

All of the products but Ensure® are sorely deficient in fiber. Carnation® Instant Breakfast Essentials™ is the cheapest supplement per serving and according to the chart, the best tasting.



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Providing in-home health care
www.CareResponse.com

3025 Boardwalk • Suite 165
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 662-2207
www.CareResponse.com
info@CareResponse.com

The gold medal though, definitely goes to the low-fat yogurt and orange for more nutrient-dense ingredients, fiber, vitamin C and photochemicals, as well as low-fat and high-calcium content, cheapest price and best taste.

Healthy guidelines for supplement users

For those who struggle to meet caloric intake, supplements can be helpful. Below are guidelines to be certain the body is receiving the nutrients it needs:

- At least 5 fruit and vegetable servings daily.
- 6–11 servings of grain products daily, preferably from whole-grain and high fiber sources.
- 2–3 low-fat or non-fat servings of dairy products daily.
- 2–3 low-fat protein servings daily.

Those who are drinking lots of supplement drinks, but not following the above guidelines, are not being provided with optimal nutrition.



Source: *The Diet Channel*