

Nutrition News

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Strong Bones: Calcium is Essential for Bone Health

Why is calcium important for bones?

- Osteoporosis and tooth decay can result from inadequate intake of calcium in the diet.
- High blood pressure has also been linked to low calcium intake.
- Calcium plays a role in developing as dense bone mass as possible in the young developing bone, and in decreasing fracture risk in the elderly.

How much Calcium do I need daily to maintain healthy bones?

| Age | Calcium Daily Reference Intake |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0-6 months | 300 mg |
| 6-12 months | 500 mg |
| 1-10 years | 600 mg-800 mg |
| 11-18 years | 800 mg-1000 mg |
| Over 18 years | 800 mg-1500 mg |
| Pregnant/lactating | Additional 400 mg |

Calcium content of commonly eaten foods

| Food | Portion Size | Calcium |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Plain yogurt | 1 cup | 450 mg |
| Grilled cheese sandwich w/ 2 slices bread and 1 1/2 oz. cheese | 1 sandwich | 371 mg |
| Fat-free or low-fat milk | 1 cup | 300mg |
| Orange juice w/ calcium | 1 cup | 300 mg |
| Low-fat chocolate milk 1% | 1 cup | 285 mg |
| Fortified cereal | 1 ounce | 236-1043 mg |
| Macaroni & cheese | 1/2 cup | 180 mg |
| Collard greens, boiled | 1/2 cup | 179 mg |

Tips to get more calcium in your diet:

Eat dairy. Choose low-fat, low-calorie products.

Exercise! Try to get at least 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise on most days of the week:

- Walking with wrist weights or dumbbells
- Weightlifting
- Dancing
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Aerobics

**Milk and milk products
provide more than 70%
of the calcium in the
U.S. diet.**

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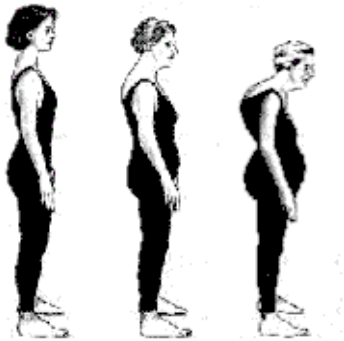
Choose calcium-rich snacks such as yogurt, cheese and crackers, or grilled cheese sandwiches.

Get enough vitamin D.

- Vitamin D can be obtained from sunlight exposure 15 minutes daily, eggs, fortified milk and fortified orange juice
- Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium
- Calcium is best absorbed when vitamin D is present.

Prevention by adequate intake of calcium now is the best way to avoid bone-density problems that may occur later in life.

If you take supplemental calcium, take one that contains calcium, vitamin D and magnesium to maximize absorption and prevent constipation.



What osteoporosis looks like

Eat Vegetables Move More!

If you are lactose tolerant and have trouble consuming dairy products, there are other ways of getting adequate calcium in the diet. Small bony fish have a lot of calcium as do some vegetables. Some common vegetables such as turnips, okra, mustard and collard greens are high in calcium, as are beans, nuts, and seeds.

Any weight bearing exercise helps build stronger bones such as walking, jogging, basketball, and soccer. Resistance exercises such as weight lifting build bone and increase muscle strength and help prevent bone loss and improve coordination.

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To find out more, contact your parish agent.