

FitFuture

strategies for better living.

Series on Fitness & Nutrition for Families

HOW YOUR SCHOOL'S MEAL PROGRAM CAN HELP



Schools participating in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs must provide at least 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium at lunch and 1/4 of the RDA at breakfast.



Even flavored milk provides children with nutrients that fall short in many children's diets: calcium, potassium and magnesium. While there are added sugars, flavored milk drinkers do not have higher intakes of added sugars or total fats than children who do not consume flavored milk.

Ingredients for Healthy Bones

By Jennifer Kerr, MS, RD

Calcium

Calcium is important for building strong, dense bones early in life and keeping them strong and healthy throughout life. Most of the calcium in the body is found in the bones and teeth, but calcium also allows blood to clot, nerves to send messages and muscles to contract.

The body cannot produce calcium on its own. Therefore, it is essential that you get enough calcium through your diet. Dairy products are the best sources of calcium, but certain green vegetables and other foods contain calcium too.

Healthy Sources of Calcium

- Dairy — Low-fat and fat free milk, yogurt, cottage cheese
- Vegetables and fruit — Dark green vegetables like broccoli, kale and spinach. Sweet potatoes and rhubarb. Figs, oranges and berries
- Calcium-fortified foods — Orange juice, cereal, bread, soy milk, and tofu products
- Meat, beans and nuts — Almonds, sardines, and canned salmon

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps increase the absorption of calcium. Our bodies make Vitamin D in the skin following sun exposure. Good food sources of Vitamin D are fortified milk and other foods, egg yolks, liver, salmon and sardines.

Weight Bearing Exercise

Exercise is also very important for strong, healthy bones. The best exercises for building bone are weight-bearing activities such as, jogging, hiking, climbing, dancing, and any other activity that makes the muscles work against gravity.

Balanced Diet

Although Calcium and Vitamin D are the two major nutrients involved in bone health, there are many other supporting vitamins and minerals involved in building and maintaining strong bones. For this reason, it is important that you and your children eat a well-balanced diet. Use the USDA's MyPyramid as your guide for balancing your intake between the food groups – grains, vegetables, fruit, milk and meat & beans, visit www.mypyramid.gov for more information.

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School Food Service Department

Learn More:

Center's for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpo/nutrition/nutrition_for_everyone/bonehealth/

National Osteoporosis Foundation: <http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/bonehealth.htm>

Powerful Bones, Powerful Girls: <http://www.girlshealth.gov/bones/>

USDA, Food and Nutrition Service Department: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/Menu/sbp-planning-approaches.doc>