

Are You and Your Child Eating Enough Foods with Calcium?

Seven out of 10 boys and nine out of 10 girls don't get the calcium they need.

Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt provide your body with the calcium it needs to make strong bones. Not eating enough calcium is a concern for the whole family. If you are not eating the recommended amount as the parent, then your child may not be getting enough either, which may increase risk of bone fractures and osteoporosis.

Assess your calcium intake with these questions and discuss the answers with your pediatrician, family doctor or registered dietitian.

1. How many times a day do you (or your child) drink white or flavored milk? (whole, 2%, 1%, or skim milk)

Answer: _____

2. How often do you (or your child) eat cheese, yogurt, yogurt drinks, or other dairy products?

Answer: _____

DOCTOR SAYS: Children and adults can get the calcium they need by enjoying three servings of milk, yogurt or cheese each day (4 servings for adolescents). Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy foods often.

3. Do you (or your child) eat any of the following: broccoli, beans, cooked greens (eg, collards, turnip greens, kale), or tofu?

Answer: _____

4. Do you (or your child) drink calcium-fortified juices or eat any other calcium-fortified foods like cereal or bread? How often?

Answer: _____

5. Do you (or your child) take any calcium supplements including those containing vitamins?

Answer: _____

DOCTOR SAYS: Dairy products, including milk, yogurt and cheese (low-fat and fat-free versions are encouraged), are the recommended way to get calcium and other nutrients like vitamin D and potassium. Many vegetables contain calcium, but large portions are required to get the amount of calcium you need. Some foods have added calcium (fortified), but they don't have other good vitamins and minerals found in dairy. For people who cannot or will not eat dairy foods, calcium supplements might be needed.

6. How often do you (or your child) drink soft drinks, fruit drinks, fruitades, etc?

Answer: _____

DOCTOR SAYS: Milk is a better drink choice. If you drink a lot of soft drinks and fruit juices and/or fruit drinks instead of milk, you might not be getting enough calcium or other important nutrients.

7. How many times a week do you (or your child) participate in vigorous physical activity?

Answer: _____

DOCTOR SAYS: Physical activity, mostly weight-bearing exercise (such as running or playing basketball), is encouraged as part of an overall healthy bone program. Be physically active most days of the week.

8. Have you (or has your child) had any bone fractures?

Answer: _____

9. Is there a family history of osteoporosis?

Answer: _____

DOCTOR SAYS: A family history of bone fractures or osteoporosis means it's even MORE important to get the right amount of calcium to improve bone health.

Be a role model and enjoy dairy with your family

(one serving * equals):



8 ounces (1cup) milk

*For ages 4 and older



1 to 1 1/2 ounces of cheese



6 or 8 ounce container of yogurt



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