

Bone Health¹

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When planning your family meals, you probably try to make sure your children get enough calcium and vitamin D, perhaps including a fresh cup of milk. Since milk is full of calcium, vitamin D, and other important nutrients, it's one of the best foods for building strong bones. People who don't get enough calcium or vitamin D are at risk for osteoporosis: weak bones that are more likely to fracture.

Our bones reach what is called "peak bone mass" at about age 30. After that, we tend to lose more calcium from our bones than we deposit, causing the bones to become porous and weak. The good news is that you're never too young or too old to improve your bone health.

So children aren't the only family members who need calcium in their daily diet. Children ages 9-18 need 1,300 milligrams; adults 19-50 need 1,000; and adults 51 and older need nearly as much as growing children, or 1,200 milligrams. To put this in terms of food, a cup of milk or yogurt has about 300 milligrams of calcium. If we have three servings of dairy foods each day, we can get the rest of the calcium we need from other foods, such as tofu, dark green leafy vegetables, and calcium-fortified foods and beverages. Fortified foods are the main sources of vitamin D in our diets, so check the food label to be sure your family is getting enough (Centers for Disease Control, 1997).

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/266.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/266.wav

References

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