

# Parents — Be Your Child's Partner in Healthy Bones!

You see your kids growing taller and filling out, so you know their bones are growing. But did you know:

- The pre-teen and teenage years are the critical years for bone development.
- Over half of total lifetime bone calcium is formed between the ages of about 11 and 20. These years represent a brief window of opportunity to build peak bone mass. Relatively little calcium is added to the skeleton after age 20.

Help them build the strongest, densest bones possible by providing lots of calcium-rich, bone-building foods and encouraging plenty of bone-building exercise.

## 4 Steps to Stronger Bones...check it out!

Which bone-building foods does your child/teen eat?

Circle the calcium foods your child/teen usually eats on most days.

### HIGH-CALCIUM FOODS

Portion Size — 1 cup milk, yogurt, pudding;  
1 1/2 oz. cheese

fat free or low-fat milk  
fat free or low-fat flavored milk  
fat free or low-fat yogurt  
2% milk  
string cheese  
cheese  
pudding or custard



### MEDIUM-CALCIUM FOODS

3 medium-calcium servings =  
1 high-calcium serving

Portion Size — 1/2 cup

1/8 of a 12" pizza  
cottage cheese (low-fat or fat free)  
frozen yogurt or ice cream  
tofu (calcium-set)  
corn tortillas (2)  
broccoli  
refried beans  
almonds (1/4 cup)



- Calcium is sometimes added to foods that don't contain it naturally - i.e. certain orange juice...read the label.

How much calcium does your family need?

AGE	CALCIUM NEEDED (milligrams)	DAILY HIGH-CALCIUM FOOD SERVINGS NEEDED
4-8	800 mg.	2
9-18	1300 mg.	3
19-50	1000 mg.	3
51+	1200 mg.	3

- Medium-calcium foods can round out your child/teen's daily calcium needs.  
Note: it takes 3 medium-calcium servings to equal 1 high-calcium serving.

Does your child/teen get enough calcium every day?

YES  NO

Look at the foods in the chart above. What one or two changes could you make to give your kids more calcium?

- Which foods could you serve more of or more often?
- Which foods could you add to your shopping list to provide your family more calcium-rich food choices for snacks and meals?

Does your child/teen get exercise every day?

At least 60 minutes total, some of which is bone-building?  YES  NO

Bone-building means activities that put the weight of the body on the bones. Walking, jogging, dancing, aerobics, tennis or team sports such as soccer or basketball are activities your kids might enjoy and they're good for the bones. Encourage family exercise outings.

- Discourage inactive pastimes such as watching television or playing video games.

## The calcium gap

- More than 86 percent of girls and 65 percent of boys fail to get enough calcium after age 11. Teens drink nearly twice as many soft drinks as milk, eliminating a major calcium source from their diets.
- Younger children are drinking more juice and less milk than in the past, so the calcium gap is likely to occur even younger than age 11.

Check off what you can do to help close your family's calcium gap



- Be a positive role model! Make sure you are meeting your own calcium needs. You can't expect your kids to get their calcium if you don't!
- Establish routine. Offer milk at meal times. It's easier to stick with routine than deal with change.
- Encourage small changes. Just one glass of milk, a piece of cheese or a carton of yogurt will provide 25 percent of your teen's daily calcium requirement.
- Packing lunch? Boost calcium with cheese on a sandwich, a carton of cold yogurt, veggies or mozzarella cheese sticks for a snack.
- Dinner ideas? Top a baked potato with plain yogurt or shredded cheese • Try a tofu and veggie stirfry • Serve pasta with a milk-based sauce and shredded Parmesan.



Sounds good, but . . .

- What if my kids don't like milk? Milk tastes best if served very cold. Chocolate milk has the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as regular milk.
- Can't I just give my kids a calcium supplement? It would take a handful of supplements to try to duplicate the unique package of nutrients in calcium-rich foods. Teach your children how to make nutritious food choices for good health, rather than reaching for supplements.