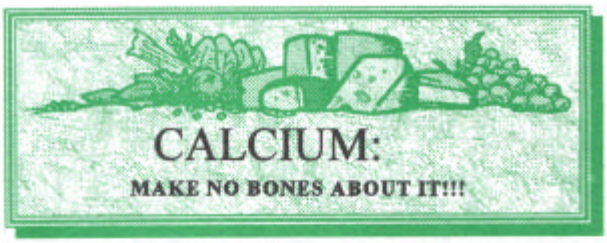


*Make no **BONES** about it, **CALCIUM** is a nutrient that plays an essential role in a variety of life-sustaining processes, one of the most important of which is the building of strong bones and teeth. Yet nutrition surveys have shown that many children in the United States--and teenagers in particular--fail to meet recommended levels of calcium intake. Milk is one of the richest sources of **CALCIUM** in the diet, but teenagers often replace milk with beverages that contribute few nutrients to the diet, such as soft drinks. **BONE** up on your knowledge about **CALCIUM** and learn what you can do to maintain strong **BONES** throughout life.*

Functions of calcium

Calcium plays an important role in many body functions:

- Builds and maintains strong bones and teeth
- Blood clotting
- Muscle contraction
- Nerve transmissions
- Normal blood pressure

Osteoporosis: the battle for your bones

Osteoporosis is a debilitating disease characterized by a reduction in the amount of bone mass in the body, resulting in bones that are very porous and fracture easily. The disease can progress painlessly for many years as the bones gradually become more fragile due to a low calcium intake. Then, in time, a fracture occurs, typically in the hip, spine or wrist. As the disease advances, it can lead to stooped posture, a loss of height, limited mobility and diminished independence. While most victims of the disease are middle-aged and elderly women, older men also are among its victims. An adequate intake of calcium throughout life reduces the potential of developing osteoporosis by maintaining strong bones. Bones achieve their maximum strength, or peak bone mass, when individuals reach their early 30's. A large amount of that peak bone mass is built during the teenage years, therefore, eating calcium-rich foods during these years is of critical importance.

Calcium requirements

The Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) for calcium are:

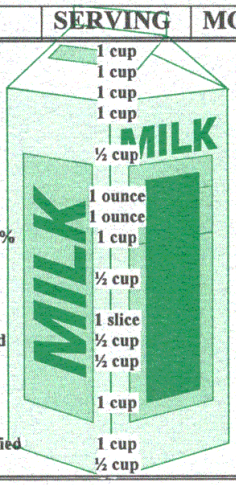
- Ages 9 - 18 — 1,300 milligrams
- Ages 19 - 50 — 1,000 milligrams
- Ages 51 and over — 1,200 milligrams

In addition to an adequate intake of calcium, exercise is essential to build and maintain bone mass. Good bone-building activities include weight-bearing exercises like running, walking, dancing, tennis and weightlifting.

Sources of calcium

Dairy products are one of the best sources of calcium in the diet because of their high calcium content and the fact that their calcium is easily absorbed. Those individuals who do not drink milk should be sure to include a variety of other calcium-rich foods in their diet. Check the following list to see how close you are to meeting your body's need for calcium.

FOOD	SERVING	MG/SERVING
Milk, skim/low-fat	1 cup	300
Milk, whole	1 cup	290
Yogurt, low-fat, plain	1 cup	415
Yogurt, low-fat, fruit added	1 cup	345
Yogurt, frozen, low-fat	½ cup	120
Cheddar cheese	1 ounce	204
Swiss cheese	1 ounce	272
Ice cream, vanilla, 11% fat	1 cup	176
Pudding, cooked with milk	½ cup	132
Pizza, cheese	1 slice	220
Spinach, fresh, cooked	½ cup	122
Turnip greens, fresh, cooked	½ cup	99
Orange juice, calcium-fortified	1 cup	240
Cereal, calcium-fortified	1 cup	200
Tofu	½ cup	130



Web Sites related to CALCIUM

GOT Milk? **http://www.whymilk.com/**

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

In the operation of the Child Feeding Programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against, write to: Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.