



## **CALCIUM NEEDS & CALCIUM SOURCES**

Milk is good for most children. A few children cannot digest milk or are allergic to it and should not drink it. Most children, though, can drink milk. Milk provides important amounts of protein, and it is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.

If your child is drinking much more than three cups of milk a day, he may be filling up on milk and not leaving enough room for the other foods that are needed for healthy nutrition.

If your child does not drink enough milk, she may not get the calcium needed to develop strong bones. To help your child get enough calcium, use more dairy products or calcium-rich foods in your cooking.

### OPTIMAL DAILY CALCIUM INTAKE

Infants, under age 1	400-600 mg (Breast fed infants need less)
Children, age 1-10	800 mg
Adolescents/Young adults, age 11-24	1200-1500 mg*
Adults, age 24-65	1000 mg*
Post-menopausal women	1500 mg*
Adults, age 65 and older	1500 mg*
During pregnancy and lactation	1200 mg*

\*1994 National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference

### WAYS TO INCLUDE CALCIUM IN THE DIET

1. Encourage your child to drink milk
  - You can make milk the only mealtime beverage except for water.
  - Do not insist, "You have to drink you milk", or use bribes. These tactics give children a clear message that they should not like milk.
  - Most children go through a stage when they do not drink milk. For many it is when they first are weaned from the nipple. Do not panic and put your child back on the bottle. Just wait. She will start to drink milk again.
  - Remember, when children are pressured to eat or drink, they usually react by eating less.
2. Use other calcium-rich foods.
  - See additional handout for further details.
3. Use a calcium supplement for children who do not get enough dietary calcium.
  - You can give calcium supplement to your child, but it may be easier to substitute foods high in calcium. There are different types of calcium supplements. The body absorbs some better than others. Supplements may be tablets, wafers, or chewables. Supplements in the form of calcium lactate or calcium carbonate are reasonably well absorbed. Avoid calcium phosphate. It may interfere with iron absorption. Also, avoid bonemeal and dolomite; they might contain lead and other trace elements that are not good for your child.
  - The dosage varies. If you need to give your child several tablets, spread them throughout the day so your child's body can absorb the calcium better.
  - Calcium supplements come with or without vitamin D. Which one should use depends on whether your child is getting enough vitamin D from other sources. (The recommended daily allowance for vitamin D is 400 IU per day.)
  - Calcium-supplemented orange juice gives a lot of calcium. However, it does not give vitamin D, nor does it give the protein that milk does.

