



NEWS RELEASE

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Ways for Teens and Tweens to get Calcium

Current trends in soft-drink consumption among adolescents suggest that teens are drinking twice as much pop as milk. Twenty years ago, these statistics were just the opposite: teens were drinking twice as much milk as pop. This decline in milk consumption is not being made up by an increase in other calcium-rich dairy products. As a result, today's teens are consuming less calcium than their parents did as teens, which puts them at even higher risk for osteoporosis, later in life.

The teenage years are an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to consume enough calcium to help prevent bone fractures and osteoporosis later in life. During the teen years, nearly half of adult skeleton is formed and about 15 percent of adult height is added, which makes these years critical for achieving full bone mass and height potential.

According to current dietary recommendations, teens need 1300 milligrams of calcium each day. Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, etc.) are our most concentrated food sources of calcium. One cup of milk contains approximately 300 milligrams of calcium and a cup of plain yogurt boasts around 400 milligrams.

Even teens who are mildly lactose intolerant often can enjoy small amounts of dairy products. Those who must avoid dairy products due to allergies or severe lactose intolerance can still consume significant amounts of calcium from dry beans, fish with edible bones, tofu (if processed with calcium sulfate), calcium-fortified orange juices and cereals, and dark green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, collards and turnip greens.

Drinking milk with meals or snacks is one of the quickest ways to boost the calcium content of your diet. For some other ideas:

- Munch for lunch—put together mini-snacks for fast fuel. Try baby carrots, whole grain crackers, string cheese, fruit and low fat milk in a plastic “to go” container.
- String cheese, please—combines with fresh fruit or dried fruit or wrap in a tortilla.
- Yogurt, fruit and whole grain to go—mix your fruit of choice, whole grain cereal and low fat yogurt in a plastic cup and eat on the go!
- Skimmed shake—make an “old fashioned” milk shake with skim milk and your favorite flavor of low fat ice cream
- Add tofu made with tofu to stir fry and other dishes.
- Top your salad with shredded cheese or dress with cottage cheese instead of oil dressings.

Source: Pat Kendall, Ph. D. R.D. Food Science and Human Nutrition Specialist, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.