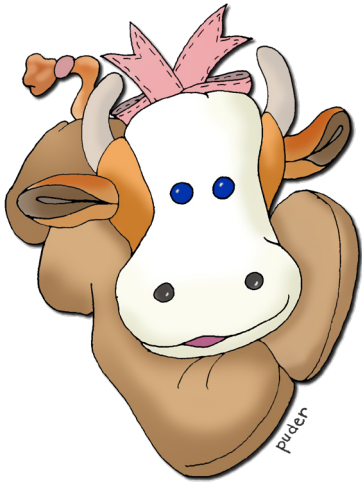


Is your child at risk For Weak Bones?

by Evelyn Selber, MD and Doug Puder, MD



Few American children get enough *calcium/vitamin D* in their diets. It is needed for the rapid growth and bone formation of childhood. They risk suffering brittle, shrinking, and broken bones later in life. During teenage years extra *calcium/vitamin D* is needed to build bone strength (density). Proper *calcium/vitamin D* intake in childhood can decrease these risks. It may also reduce blood pressure. We think the Dairy Association campaign to promote milk drinking is right on target.

Breast milk or infant formula (not regular milk) is important for the entire first year of life. We usually recommend whole cow's milk for your child's second year of life, and find no reason why toddlers need "follow-up" formulas. After age two, concern about the fat content of milk will depend on family risk factors for heart disease and cholesterol. We may recommend 2% milk fat, 1%, or skim milk. They all provide the *same* amount of *calcium* (300mg/8oz).

Few American children get enough calcium!



Recommended Daily Amount of Calcium:

| | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 years: | 500 mg/day | = 2 servings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 8 years: | 800 mg/day | = 3 servings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 – 18 years: | 1,300 mg/day | = 4 servings |

If your child doesn't like to drink milk, don't despair. A serving of cheese (300mg/1.5oz), yogurt (300mg/8oz), cottage cheese, or other dairy product will provide the same amount of *calcium*. Many juices are now calcium fortified (as much as 300mg/8oz). Children allergic to milk have a greater challenge, but luckily most children will outgrow milk allergy. Other good sources of *calcium*:

- *Calcium/vitamin D* vitamins such as *Teen OneA Day* (for over age 13 when fluoride vitamins aren't needed)
- *Calcium* chewable "candies" (500mg each) many flavors (*VIActiv, Flintstones, Caltrate*, many generics)
- Fortified Soy Milk (look for 300mg/8oz)
- Juices fortified with *Calcium* or plain oranges (50mg each)
- Green Leafy Vegetables:)Spinach (240mg/cup)
Broccoli (70mg/cup) Collard Greens, Kale
- White Beans (225mg/cup)



Exercise is also needed for strong bones!

Adequate exercise is also essential for strong bones. "Couch potato kids" who exercise little and overeat "junk" food have many health risks including weak bones later in life!

We hope you find our *Parentletter* helpful and informative. Please keep in mind that receipt of this newsletter does not create a doctor/patient relationship and that it is not meant to serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. For particular pediatric medical concerns, including decisions about diagnoses, medications and other treatments, or if you have any questions after reading this newsletter, please speak with your child's pediatrician. (All illustrations © D.Puder,MD)

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