

# Healthy Bones & Teeth

1-8 years old

Kids need calcium to build strong bones and teeth. The amount needed each day depends on his or her age. How much calcium does my child need each day?

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Kids Age	Amount of calcium they need	Calcium-rich servings each day
1-3 years	700 milligrams	2 servings
4-8 years	1,000 milligrams	3 servings

Calcium-rich foods	Amount equal to one serving
Milk	1 cup (8 ounces)
Natural cheese like cheddar or string cheese	1 ½ ounces (two ¾ ounce slices)
Yogurt	6 - 8 ounce container
Almond milk or soy milk*	1 cup (8 ounces)
Fortified ready-to-eat cereals	¾ - 1 cup
Tofu, soft or hard	½ cup
White beans, cooked	1 cup
Greens (kale, bok choy, broccoli, collards, Chinese cabbage)	1 cup
Almonds	1.5 ounces (30 or so nuts) - a big handful

\*The USDA recommends soy milk as the optimum alternative to cow's milk

## Tips for a calcium boost

There are small amounts of calcium in most fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and lentils. Providing your child a variety of whole foods at each meal and snack time (in addition to the calcium-rich foods listed above) is the best way to make sure your child is getting the calcium he or she needs.

- Serve milk or a milk alternative at meals and water between meals.
- Add dark green leafy vegetables to your sandwiches or sauces for dinner.
- Offer ½ cup of low-sugar yogurt with fruit as part of breakfast or for a snack.
- A handful of almonds paired with fruit is a great snack.
- Try tofu in place of meat for dinner. Toddlers often enjoy eating and squishing tofu.
- Substitute milk for water when making hot cereals, instant or regular mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, pancakes and condensed soups like tomato.

## Tips for Lactose Sensitive Kids

If your child is lactose intolerant or only tolerates small amounts of milk, or milk products, try aged cheeses like cheddar and Swiss, which have much lower lactose levels. Yogurt has "friendly" bacteria called active cultures, which lower lactose levels. If your child avoids milk, soy milk is the best alternative because it contains the right amount of protein for each serving. Almond milk and rice milk have little protein. If you provide these milks, also provide a variety of other protein sources like lean meats, eggs, nuts, and beans. Almonds, tofu, dark green leafy vegetables, and canned sardines or salmon, are excellent non-dairy sources of calcium.

## Source:

Golden, NH., Abrams, SA, Committee on Nutrition. *Optimizing Bone Health in Children and Adolescents*. 2014. American Academy of Pediatrics. *Pediatr.* 134(4) e1229-e1243.

*Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2020; visit [www.health.us.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.health.us.gov/dietaryguidelines) and [www.choosemyplate.gov/kids](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids)*

