



Calcium handout

Daily Calcium Needs

It is important to understand how much calcium kids actually need. The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences recommends:

- 500 mg a day for kids who are 1 to 3 years old
- 800 mg a day for kids who are 4 to 8 years old
- 1,300 mg a day for kids who are 9 to 18 years old

Keep in mind that calcium's percent Daily Value (% DV), which is a guide to how much of a particular nutrient you should get each day, on food labels is based on the adult requirements of 1000 mg a day. So a cup of milk that was 30% DV for calcium, would be equal to 300 mg of calcium, which would actually be equal to 60% of a toddler's calcium needs for the day. But it would be only about 23% of a teen's calcium needs. That means that you can only really use the % DV as a guide to how much calcium your kids are getting from the foods they are eating each day.

Calcium Rich Foods

In addition to choosing foods from the following list, you should learn to look at food labels and choose foods that have a high % DV for calcium and at least 20% or more.

You may find big differences in the calcium content of foods, even among different brands of the same foods such as cheese, juice, and bread.

- Yogurt, plain
- Yogurt, fruit
- Milk, low fat or nonfat
- Milk, whole
- Cheese, including American, ricotta, cheddar cheese and mozzarella cheese
- Milk shakes
- Eggnog

Non-dairy Foods with Calcium

Getting enough calcium can be an especially hard if your kids are allergic to milk. These nondairy foods can be good choices for kids with milk allergies who need calcium:

- Salmon
- Tofu
- Rhubarb
- Sardines
- Collard greens
- Spinach
- Turnip greens
- Okra
- White beans
- Baked beans
- Broccoli
- Peas
- Brussel sprouts
- Sesame seeds
- Bok choy
- Almonds

Calcium-fortified Foods

In addition to the large number of calcium rich foods that are naturally found, like milk and cheese, a lot of foods are now fortified with calcium. These can be especially good choices if your child doesn't like to drink milk.

- Calcium-fortified breakfast cereal, including General Mills Whole Grain Total, Total Raisin Bran, Total Cranberry Crunch, and Total Honey Clusters, all of which have 100% DV of calcium per serving!
- Calcium-fortified orange juice
- Calcium-fortified soy or almond milk

- Orange juice with added Calcium
- Instant oatmeal
- Calcium-fortified bread or English muffins
- Calcium-fortified drink mixes such as Pediasure or Carnation Instant Breakfast
- Other calcium-fortified breakfast cereals, including General Mills Golden Grahams (350 mg)

By learning to read food labels, you may be able to find other foods that are fortified with calcium.

Calcium supplements and multivitamins are other sources of Calcium.