

Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



Calcium: An Important Nutrient

Why is calcium important in your diet? Your baby's bones and teeth are developing and calcium is necessary for both strong bones and good teeth. For teenage mothers, their bones are growing along with their baby's.

What foods provide calcium?

- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Pudding
- Cottage cheese
- Custard
- Ice Milk
- Milk, including skim and low-fat milk

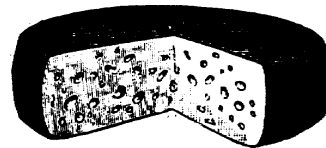
How much do you need? While you are pregnant, you need 4 servings of milk and milk products every day.

How much is one serving? Some examples are:

- 1 cup of milk
- 1 1/2 ounces of cheese (about one slice)
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1/2 cup of ice milk or frozen yogurt

Some people may have stomachaches, cramps, and diarrhea after drinking milk. These are common symptoms of "lactose intolerance." This happens when the body cannot digest the lactose or milk sugar in the milk. How do you get the calcium you need if you can't drink milk?

- Drink just 1/4 cup of milk with something else to eat several times a day.
- Eat yogurt and cheese since they have less lactose or milk sugar.



- Eat macaroni and cheese, omelets with cheese or cereal and milk.
- Drink acidophilus milk developed for people with lactose intolerance.

Do other foods contain calcium? Yes, but they do not have as much calcium as milk products. You will need to eat more of these to equal one serving of milk.

- Dried beans and peas
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Greens
- Tofu
- Cornmeal tortillas fortified with calcium
- Orange juice fortified with calcium

Ask your doctor about prenatal supplements containing calcium. Your body can more easily use the calcium in food than in pill form. Make an extra effort to eat foods rich in calcium.

Suggested Readings:

Erick, M. (1987). *D.I.E.T. during pregnancy*. Brookline, MA: Grinnen-Barrett Publishing Company.

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March of Dimes (1992). *Eating for two: Nutrition during pregnancy information sheet*. White Plains, NY: Author.

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References:

Eisenberg, Arlene, Murkoff, Heidi E., and Hathaway, Sandee. E. (1986) *What to eat when you're expecting*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Gong, E., and Spear, B. (1988). Adolescent growth and development: Implications for nutritional needs. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 20, 273-279.

Sandler, R., Slemenda, C., LaPorte, R., Cauley, J., Schramm, M., Barresi, and Kriska, A. (1985). Postmenopausal bone density and milk consumption in childhood and adolescence. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 42, 270-274.

Story, M. (1990). Nutrient needs during adolescence and pregnancy. In M. Story (Ed.) *Nutrition management of the pregnant adolescent* (pp. 21-28). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse.



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