

# CALCIUM RICH FOODS

All growing children need calcium and vitamin D to help their bones grow and be strong. Those with less than adequate levels are prone to fractures, bending of the bones as they grow (known as rickets). Studies in adults have shown that low levels of vitamin D and calcium are common in people with heart disease and some cancers. Bone growth/increased density continues until about the age of 24 years. After age 24, you can only prevent bone loss but you cannot build stronger bones. What you eat as a child and adolescent determines how strong your bones will be as an adult.

Calcium/Vitamin D supplements are needed in addition to a good calcium-rich diet as an adolescent because during this time of rapid growth it is very difficult to eat all the calcium your body needs. Be aware that caffeine increases the amount of calcium that your kidneys remove from your body, giving it less time to be absorbed into your bones. People who drink soda are also at an increased risk for bone fractures (because soda inhibits calcium absorption or because people who drink soda do not drink enough milk? We do not know yet.)

## Calcium Needs

Toddlers 500mg/day (about 2 servings/day)

Preschool and school age 800mg/day (about 2-3 servings/day)

9yrs through adolescence 1300mg/day !!!! (4 servings/day)

## Calcium-Rich Foods

- ❖ Kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, spinach
- ❖ Broccoli
- ❖ Bok Choy
- ❖ Dried Figs
- ❖ Milk, yogurt and cheese
- ❖ Soy milk, yogurt, cheese
- ❖ Calcium-fortified orange juice

**Vitamin D** helps the calcium in your body get incorporated into your bones. Most of us get vitamin D from sun exposure. You need about 10-15min/day about 2 days/week to get enough. This is difficult to get in the winter and has a risk of skin cancer from prolonged sun exposure. Therefore, to supplement small amounts of sun-exposure, some vitamin D rich foods are needed.

## Vitamin D Needs

Infants 400 IU/day

Children and adults 600 IU/day

## Vitamin D-Rich Foods

- ❖ Fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, mackerel and cod liver oil
- ❖ Cheese
- ❖ Egg yolks
- ❖ Milk