



## Healthy Bones

Doc Rock

No one has ever seen a dinosaur. But most people know what they look like. Why? Because dinosaur bones can be connected to form a skeleton that tells its shape. Humans have bones that connect into a skeleton too. Those bones give shape to our bodies, help us walk and run and lift things, help us chew our food (teeth, jaw bone) and even help us hear (small bones in the inner ear).



Calcium is a key building block of healthy bones. Our bones contain almost all of the 3 pounds of calcium we carry around with us. Just 1% of calcium is in our bloodstream and is used for some very important things like making our heart beat properly, our blood clot, or making our nerves work. If we don't get enough calcium from the food we eat, our body will take calcium out of our bones to use in our cells to keep us healthy.

Some people think that bones don't do anything; they're just dry bones like the skeletons we see on Halloween. But that's not true. Bones are made of living cells like every other part of our body. That is why bones grow when we are getting taller and why bones heal if they break. Bones can also fix tiny cracks that happen when we bang into things, or even from normal wear and tear. At any one time, special bone cells are fixing nearly 2 million places on our bone's surface.

Now you know why we need to eat enough calcium: so we can have healthy bones! But more than 4 of 5 girls and 3 of 5 boys between the ages of 9 to 18 don't get enough calcium. They need about 1,300 milligrams of calcium every day. And some very popular foods and drinks like soda, caffeinated beverages, alcohol and salty French fries may even lower the amount of calcium we get from our diet because they make it hard for our body

to get or to use calcium. No wonder so many people tell us to “Drink your milk” or “Take your calcium supplement”.

**How much calcium do you need? Here is what doctors say:**

- Up to age 2 years – 500 milligrams a day
- Kids ages 4 to 8 years – 800 milligrams a day
- Children ages 9 to 18 years – 1,300 milligrams a day

There are two ways to get enough calcium. One way is by taking a calcium supplement. The other way is to eat enough food that has calcium in it like milk and other dairy products. They not only contain calcium but also vitamin D which is also important for healthy bones. But there are lots of other calcium rich foods as well, such as orange juice that has calcium added and soy. Here are some other foods that also have lots of calcium in them:

**Calcium, Calorie, and Fat Content  
Of Common Dairy Foods\***

	<u>CALCIUM (mg)</u>	<u>CALORIES</u>	<u>FAT (grams)</u>
<b><u>Milk and Milk Beverages</u></b>			
Milk, whole, 1 cup	291	150	8
Milk, low-fat (2%), 1 cup	297	120	5
Milk, low-fat (1%), 1 cup	300	100	1
Milk, skim, 1 cup	302	85	0
Chocolate Milk, (1%), 1 cup	287	160	1
Buttermilk, 1 cup	285	100	2
<b><u>Cheeses</u></b>			
American, 1 oz	174	105	9
Cheddar, 1 oz	204	115	9
Cottage, low-fat (1%), 1 cup	155	160	2
Mozzarella, part-skim, 1 oz	207	80	5
Swiss, 1 oz	272	105	8
<b><u>Yogurt</u></b>			
Plain, low-fat, 8 oz	415	145	3
Plain, nonfat, 8 oz	452	125	0
Fruit, low-fat, 8 oz	345	230	3
Coffee or vanilla, 8 oz	389	194	3
<b><u>Desserts</u></b>			
Ice milk, hardened, 1 cup	176	185	6
Ice milk, soft serve, 1 cup	274	225	5
Ice cream, (11% milk fat) 1 cup	176	270	14
Sherbet (2% fat), 1 cup	103	270	6

### OTHER GOOD SOURCES OF CALCIUM

Almonds	75	165	16
Broccoli, cooked, 1/2 cup	47	25	0
Collard greens, cooked, 1/2 cup	179	30	0
Kale, cooked, 1/2 cup	90	20	0
Salmon, pink, canned, with liquid and bones, 3 oz	167	120	5
Sardines, canned in oil, with liquid and bones, 3 oz	371	175	9
Snap beans, cooked, 1/2 cup	31	18	0
Tofu, firm, raw, 1/4 block	166	118	7.1
Curdled with calcium salt	553	118	7.1
Tofu, regular, raw, 1/4 block	122	88	5.6
Curdled with calcium salt	406	88	5.6
Soybeans, dry roasted, 1/2 cup	232	387	18.6
Soybeans, boiled, 1/2 cup	88	149	7.7
Soy protein concentrate, 1 ounce	102	93	0.13

Vegetables are another great way to get calcium and they don't have fat in them like milk and cheese do. Milk is good for us but milk also has fat in it and eating too much fat is bad for our hearts. Skim milk has the fat skimmed off. A small carton only has 80 calories and one quarter of child's recommended daily calcium.

Even though milk is an important way to get calcium, some kids can't or won't eat milk or dairy products. Here is why:

*Lactose intolerance:* Milk has a sugar in it called lactose (**lack** – toes). Some people can't digest that sugar. They get a stomachache and bad gas when they eat food made from milk. Tell your doctor if this happens. So many people have this problem that you can buy food that takes the lactose out of the milk so people won't feel sick. It's called lactose – free. You can also add drops to milk that will get the lactose out before you drink it [lactase (lack – taze) drops] or eat a lactase pill before you drink milk or eat food with milk in it. Most drug stores and food stores sell them. Many people who can't eat lactose can eat yogurt and it won't bother them.

*Milk Allergy or Vegetarian kids:* Some people are allergic to milk and shouldn't eat or drink milk at all. They can eat other foods that have lots of calcium like dark green leafy vegetables, almonds, chickpeas, broccoli, calcium fortified juices, soy and rice drinks and cereals.

*Exercise regularly.* Exercises like running, walking, jumping rope and skating make bone cells grow healthy and strong. In fact, exercise may be just as important as getting enough calcium.

So Remember, milk and calcium make bones long. Fruits and veggies help keep them strong. Exercise and you can't go wrong. You'll have healthy bones.