

Dairy products are necessary throughout lifecycle

ARLINGTON, Va. — Many of us still believe in the age-old myth that milk and other dairy products are only necessary during the growing years. On the contrary, a calcium-rich diet has been recognized by leading medical authorities as significant in helping to prevent certain diseases and in keeping teeth and bones strong throughout all stages of the lifecycle. Calcium is also important for normal nerve function, blood clotting and muscle contraction.

Life's Early Stages

At birth, a baby's bones are soft and pliable. To strengthen and harden the teeth and bones, an infant from five months to one year must receive about 540 mg/day of calcium.

It has been highly recommended that a baby receive most of its calcium needs through breast feeding. In fact, studies show that the calcium in the mother's milk is more easily absorbed than the calcium in a prepared formula. From ages one to ten, calcium needs increase to 800 mg/day.

Calcium intake becomes increasingly important as the child grows. During the teenage years, ages 11 to 18, the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium skyrockets to 1,200 mg/day. That's equal to four servings from the milk group.

Increased calcium intake during the adolescent growth spurt is essential, for it is during this period that the body forms 45 percent of its bone mass and 15 percent of its adult height. Making sure that calcium-rich foods are added to a sound eating plan at an early age will ensure a growing teenage boy long-term overall health.

Calcium: The Adult Diet Staple

As adults, the bones in our bodies stop growing in length and width, yet they continue to increase in

density. Whether they get stronger or weaker all depends on how much calcium the body is fed. Without the necessary amounts of calcium during the adult years, there is an increasing risk that bones may never reach their full strength. This opens the way to the possibility of osteoporosis.

The often less than adequate supply of calcium in the adult diet is a growing concern in our country today. On any given day, two-thirds of all females between the ages of 18 and 34 consume less than the adult RDA for calcium.

If the body continually loses calcium, bones become thinner and weaker, and fractures may result. Keeping milk and other dairy products as a constant in an adult's diet, (two servings per day), will help ensure strong, dense bones.

Building A Better Baby

Throughout pregnancy, a woman's body uses the food she eats to help her child develop and grow. If she does not feed her body what it needs, her health as well as the baby's may suffer.

Calcium is very important to a growing fetus, and the bones and teeth need plenty of the mineral to develop properly. If the mother's diet does not contain enough calcium, the baby's bones will develop at the expense of the mother's. Therefore, it is twice as important for her to receive the RDA for pregnant and lactating women of 1200 mg/day of calcium.

Calcium also keeps her heart and muscles in good condition and may help prevent development of high blood pressure—a condition to which some women are susceptible late in pregnancy.

Pregnant teenagers are more susceptible to health problems than older pregnant females. To begin with, the baby is not the only one growing. While the fetus' organs and bones are developing, so are the mother's.

Since the fetus receives all of its nutrients directly from the mother, it is essential that the teenager feed her body with the required amount of calcium. However, teenage girls commonly have a low calcium content in their diets. This can seriously jeopardize the health of both the mother and growing child because they are both in competition for what little calcium is available.

It is crucial that pregnant and lactating women of all ages keep up a well-balanced diet stocked with calcium-rich dairy foods. The calcium will help build a healthy baby and keep mother's body fit.

Maintaining The Body Beautiful

During menopause, women experience a rapid decline in the production of the hormone estrogen by the body. Estrogen helps promote calcium absorption. Therefore, in a women going through menopause, less calcium is absorbed.

This decrease in estrogen levels results in increased bone loss. Thus calcium intake needs to be increased from the adult RDA of 800 mg/day. For post-menopausal women, many medical and nutrition experts recommend that the calcium intake be increased to as much as 1,500 mg/day to counteract this effect.

In both men and women, calcium absorption decreases as one grows older. This is probably in part, caused by the lack of vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. Since the elderly are often housebound or confined, they may only absorb a marginal amount of the needed calcium. Vitamin D helps the body use calcium. Therefore, it's extremely important that an adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D be maintained to combat age-related bone loss.

Getting plenty of calcium is of prime importance in helping to ensure a healthy, strong body throughout life.

Scholarships available to 4-H'ers

4-H'ERIA — Financial aid for college students gets more difficult to come by, but more than \$33,000 is available to 4-H members through the national 4-H program. Members who meet the requirements set by the Cooperative Extension Service are eligible for these scholarships provided by private sector donors and arranged by National 4-H Council.

Ten new \$1,000 scholarships are available for minority 4-H members pursuing an agriculture-related career at a land-grant institution. These scholarships are provided by E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company of Wilmington, Del., and are renewable based on the recipient's academic record. Other \$1,000 scholarships are provided to members taking food preservation, rabbit or dairy goat projects.

Any member whose career choice has been influenced by 4-H is eligible for the \$750 Gertrude L. Warren scholarship. Warren was a pioneer 4-H leader often described as the "Mother of 4-H."

Who's Who Among American High School Students is providing two \$1,000 scholarships to current and former 4-H members enrolled this fall at an accredited college, university, technical or trade school.

A \$3,000 scholarship is provided by the Tobe-Coburn School for Fashion Careers, New York City, for a youth interested in a career in

the fashion industry.

For those interested in agriculture careers, DeKalb AgResearch, Inc., is providing four \$1,000 scholarships and trips to National 4-H Congress.

The Education Foundation of Alpha Gamma Rho, Des Plaines, Ill., is sponsoring a \$1,000 award for a current 4-H member who will be enrolled this fall as a college freshman in agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine or a closely-related field.

Wayne-Feed Division, Continental Grain Company, Chicago, Ill., donates two \$1,000 scholarships to present or former 4-H members who will enroll as college juniors this fall with a major in animal science. Two 4-H members, currently enrolled in a college of veterinary medicine, can receive a \$1,000 scholarship provided by Champion Valley Farms, Inc., Camden, N.J.

The Edwin T. Meredith Foundation provides two \$1,000 scholarships for outstanding 4-H members who live in one of the 15 states including Pennsylvania.

All applicants must have completed at least one year of 4-H work. Winners selected by the Cooperative Extension Service will be announced at the National 4-H Congress.

Present and former 4-H members interested in applying for these scholarships should contact their county Extension office for more information and application forms.

Avon-East Lebanon

4-H Club

The Avon-East Lebanon 4-H club met recently at the Avon United Methodist Church.

Ann Grumbine gave a demon-

stration on "Giving Demonstrations." Jill Hoffer and Marsha Hain played two songs for the group.



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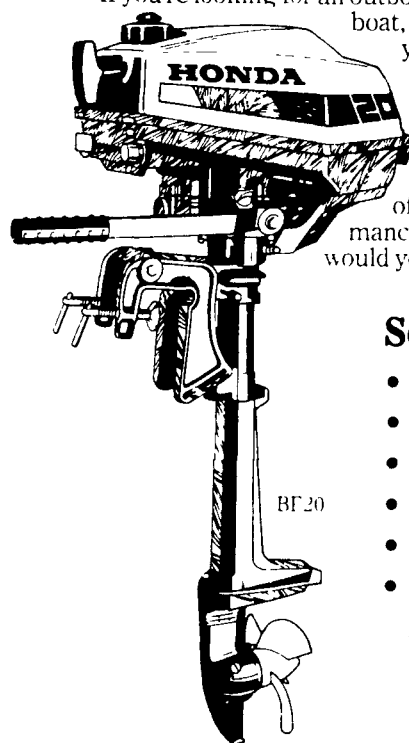
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