

FN697 (Reviewed August 2021)



# More Calcium-rich Foods!

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Children who eat with their families are more likely to meet their calcium needs and drink less soda pop. That's good news because children are building strong bones and need calcium and other nutrients as the building blocks.

Teens have the highest calcium needs due to their rapid growth. Children who meet their calcium and other nutrient needs are less likely to get the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis when they grow older. Adults should meet their calcium needs to keep their bones strong throughout life.

About 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and another 18 million are at risk of getting it due to low bone mass. Even though osteoporosis often is associated with women, about 20 percent of those who suffer from it are male. Osteoporosis is responsible for 1.5 million fractures a year, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

## Get Your Calcium

Calcium is found in foods such as milk, yogurt, cheese, cooked dry edible beans, fish with edible bones and leafy, green vegetables. Some foods, such as certain cereals and orange juice, may be fortified with calcium.

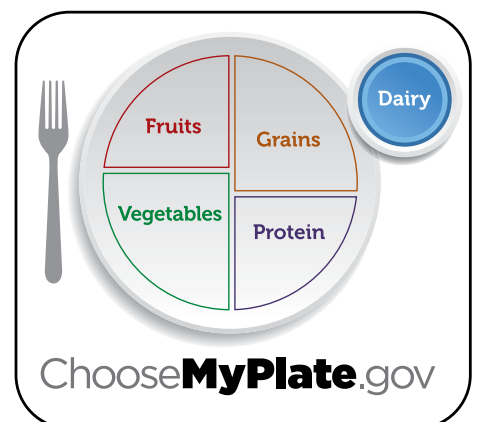
Milk is an excellent source of calcium (300 milligrams per cup), plus it contains protein, riboflavin, vitamin A, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus and other nutrients. Vitamin D is added to fluid milk because it helps the body use the calcium in milk.

## Aim for MyPlate Recommendations

Children ages 2 to 8 need 2 cups from the Dairy Group daily. Children ages 9 and older need at least 3 cups daily. Adults need 3 cups daily.

One cup of dairy equals:

- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1½ ounces of natural cheese
- 2 ounces processed cheese



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## Which is More Nutritious: Whole or Low-fat Milk?

Glass for glass, reduced-fat, fat-free and whole milk only differ in the amount of fat and calories they contain. The other nutrients are about the same.

Nutrition experts recommend selecting lower-fat dairy products. If you usually drink whole milk, switch gradually to fat-free milk to lower saturated fat and calories. Try reduced-fat (2 percent), then low-fat (1 percent) and finally fat-free (skim).

## Should I Choose Flavored or Plain Milk?

Flavored milk has more calories but the body still absorbs the calcium. To learn more about your beverage choices, compare Nutrition Facts labels.

Nutrition researchers have shown that children who drink more chocolate milk tend to drink fewer soft drinks and fruit-flavored beverages. As a result, they consumed more calcium.

## Quick Nutrition Tip

To learn how many milligrams of calcium are in your food choice, add a zero to the “percent daily value” for calcium. A cup of milk has 30 percent of the daily value or 300 milligrams of calcium.

## Food Storage Tip

Keep your refrigerator at 40 F or lower to keep perishable foods, such as milk, yogurt and cheese, fresh.

### My Family Meal Goal to Include More Calcium

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## What If I Am Lactose Intolerant?

Some people are “lactose intolerant.” They feel bloated and get a stomach ache (or worse) when they consume dairy. They are missing an enzyme (lactase) needed to break down milk sugar (lactose).

Being lactose intolerant is different from being “allergic” to milk. If someone is “allergic” to milk, that person must avoid any products containing milk because the individual can have severe, sometimes life-threatening, reactions to milk.

Research has shown that most people who are lactose intolerant can drink some milk if they drink it along with meals. Those with lactose intolerance usually can tolerate dairy products with active cultures and aged cheeses. Commercial enzymes, such as Lactaid, are available to break down the lactose in milk.

## Family Fitness Tip

Weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, builds strong bones and muscles. Go for a family walk and have an ice-cold glass of milk to quench your thirst when you return.

### Fitting Calcium in Family Meals

- Enjoy milk with meals.
- Have “milk breaks” at home.
- Use milk instead of water when making hot cereal or cream soups.
- Enjoy yogurt parfaits for dessert. Layer yogurt with slices of peaches, strawberries or other fruits.
- Add low-fat cheese to casseroles, baked potatoes or vegetables to add some calcium.
- Serve a variety of calcium-containing foods, such as broccoli and other leafy greens, and cooked dry edible beans.
- Have cheese and whole-grain crackers for family snacks.

# Recipes

Invite kids into the kitchen to help prepare these easy recipes. They will learn valuable food preparation and communication skills as they help prepare food. Children also are more likely to try foods they helped prepare.

## Cheesy Tortilla Minipizzas

- 4 6-inch flour tortillas
- ½ c. chunky-style medium salsa
- ½ c. reduced-fat mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese
- ½ c. chopped green pepper
- ½ c. frozen corn kernels, thawed
- ¼ c. chopped onion
- ¼ c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. Place tortillas on a baking sheet. Bake for about seven minutes, until crisp. Remove from oven and top each tortilla with about 2 tablespoons of salsa and 2 tablespoons of cheese. Sprinkle with green pepper, corn and red onion; top with cheddar cheese. Bake about five minutes, until cheese melts.

*Makes four servings. Each serving (one minipizza) has 190 calories, 7 g fat, 9 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 540 mg sodium and 198 mg calcium.*

**Menu Idea:**  
Cheesy Tortilla Minipizzas, carrot sticks, sliced peaches and low-fat milk

## Sassy Potato Topper

- 1 8-ounce container plain, nonfat yogurt
- ¼ c. chunky salsa
- 1 Tbsp. chopped red or green pepper
- 1 medium green onion, chopped  
(or ¼ c. chopped yellow or white onion)

Combine all ingredients and chill. Serve over hot, baked potatoes.

*Makes four servings. Each serving has 35 calories, 0 g fat, 3 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber, 160 mg sodium and 116 mg calcium.*

**Menu Idea:**  
Baked potato with Sassy Potato Topper, baked chicken, green beans, red grapes and low-fat milk

## Morning Shake

- 1 c. fat-free milk
- 1 banana (or 1 c. frozen peaches)
- 3 Tbsp. frozen orange juice concentrate

Blend all ingredients in blender or with hand mixer until smooth. Pour into glasses.

*Makes two servings. Each serving has 130 calories, 0 g fat, 5 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 55 mg sodium and 295 mg calcium.*

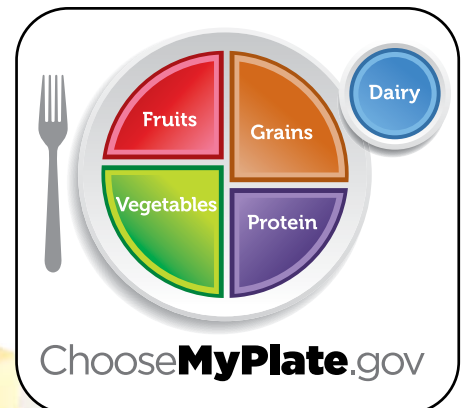
**Menu Idea:**  
Morning Shake and whole-wheat tortilla with melted cheese



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- Visit the NDSU Extension website at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)
- Visit [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) for more information about healthful eating for the entire family.



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