

If your child is on a special diet speak to your child's Registered Paediatric Dietitian or GP to ensure they are getting enough calcium.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps your body make the most of the calcium you eat. About 90% of our vitamin D comes from the sunlight which our bodies then use to make vitamin D in our skin. There isn't currently enough evidence to recommend how much sunlight children need. By your child regularly enjoying some time outside during the summer months you can help ensure they are getting enough vitamin D. Babies should always be kept out of direct sunlight. Vitamin D can also be found in margarines, eggs, oily fish (e.g. herring or sardines), cod liver oil and fortified breakfast cereals. It is recommended that children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years of age take vitamin drops to help meet their total daily requirements for vitamin D of 7-8.5 microgrammes (µg).

A Healthy Balanced Diet

Calcium and vitamin D are essential to build healthy bones but so is a healthy balanced diet. Encourage your child to eat a varied diet and include foods from the 4 main food groups:

- Fruit and vegetables, including 5 portions daily.
- Carbohydrate foods like bread, potatoes, pasta and cereals. Try to offer something from this food group at each meal.
- Milk and other dairy products, try to offer 2 or 3 servings each day.
- Protein foods like meat, fish, eggs, pulses, nuts and seeds. Try to include at least 2 servings from this group each day.

It is also important to make sure your child drinks sufficient fluid, 6-8 cups of fluid is recommended per day. Water, milk and sugar free squashes are the best drinks to choose.

Exercise and strong bones

Bones love to exercise. Exercises that are particularly good for building strong bones are **weight bearing exercises**. Weight bearing exercise is any physical activity where your child is taking the weight of their own body.

Some good examples of weight bearing exercises are:

- Dancing or exercises to music are fun ways to boost bone health
- Running or even walking help to build bone in the spine and hips
- Team sports such as football or netball are not only good weight bearing exercises but they also encourage all children to take part
- Skipping is a good bone builder, aim for 5 minutes each day

PROTECT YOUR
SKELLY
OR YOU'LL BE
LIKE JELLY!

Image designed by Adam Kernohan from Broughshane Primary School

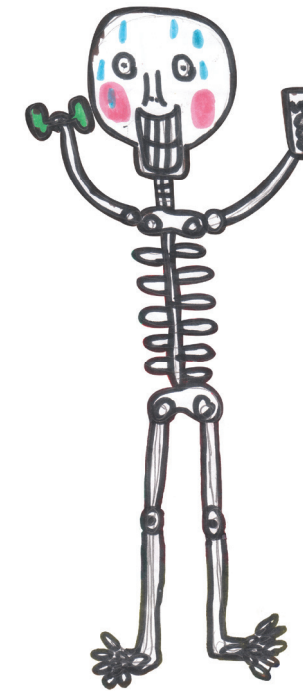


Image designed by Amy Watt from Randalstown Central Primary school

Further copies of this leaflet can be obtained from: Health Improvement/Community Development Service, Spruce House, Cushendall Road, Ballymena Tel: 028 2563 5575



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NT/CS/02/13/025/PEN 10K CCD

Strong Healthy Bones
A guide for promoting
your child's bone health

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Bones and the skeleton

Bones and the skeleton form the framework of our bodies. Bones help us to move and protect our internal organs. Without bones we would look like very different creatures.

A baby's body has many more bones than an adult's, some of these bones grow together to form the 206 bones that we have as adults.

Our bones are very much alive, growing and changing all the time. Although we may reach our full height by our late teens, our bones are still growing in strength (density) up until our twenties.

Why is bone health so important for children?

During childhood and teenage years your child should build as much bone as possible.

So now is the time to maximise your child's bone strength and density!

Ensuring your child builds strong bones in childhood and adolescence will lower their chances of developing osteoporosis in later life. Osteoporosis is the fragile bone disease that can lead to possible fractures in later life.

Although our bone strength is mainly decided by our genes, if children are encouraged to take plenty of exercise and eat a well balanced calcium rich diet, they can still build strong healthy bones.

Food for your child's bones

Calcium

To build long lasting bones your child's diet needs to include enough calcium. Calcium gives strength and density to our bones and teeth.

How much calcium does your child need?

Age	Daily calcium requirements 1 bone I = 60mg calcium approximately
Under 1	525mg (9 bones)
1-3 years	350mg (6 bones)
4-6 years	450mg (7½ bones)
7-10 years	550mg (9 bones)
11-18 years (girls)	800mg (13 bones)
11-18 years (boys)	1000mg (16 bones)

Our bodies can't make calcium. From birth to becoming an adult our bones gain about 1 kilogramme (kg) of calcium. By eating foods and drinks rich in calcium we can ensure we are getting enough calcium and build as much bone as possible for the future.

The best sources of calcium are milk and dairy products. **Use the table to the right to check if your child is getting enough:**

Calcium Counter

Food	Calcium content
Milk, all types (200ml)	I I I I
Cheese (30g)	I I I I
Yoghurt (150g)	I I I I
Rice Pudding (200g)	I I I
Custard (120ml)	I I
Calcium fortified cereal 1 serving (30g) e.g. <i>Cheerios, Oats and More, Frosties</i>	I to I I
Calcium fortified instant hot oat cereal 1 serving (30g) e.g. <i>Ready Brek®</i> or supermarket own brand	I I I I I I
Wholemeal bread 2 large slices	I
White bread 2 large slices	I I
Calcium fortified bread 1 slice e.g. <i>Hovis best of both</i>	I I I
Baked beans small tin (220g)	I I I
Sardines (60g)	I I I I

Adapted from "Calcium, are you getting enough?" BDA, Food allergy and Intolerance Specialist Group 2012.