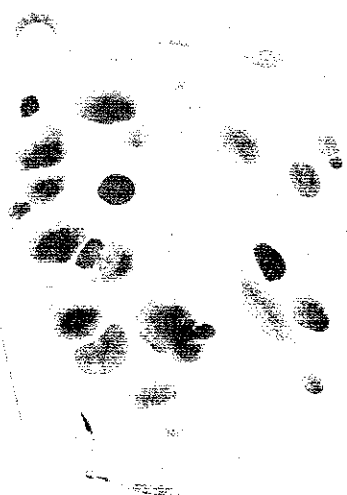




Drinking milk is a great way to get calcium into your body.

# Calcium & YOU

NOT GETTING ENOUGH CALCIUM IN YOUR BODY IS BAD NEWS FOR YOUR GROWING BONES. HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.



Cheese is another source of calcium.

Here's something you should know: 90 percent of teenage girls and 70 percent of teenage boys don't get enough calcium from the food they consume. Some of you may be wondering why you should care about this. Here's the answer: Calcium makes a person's bones strong, and bones grow a lot during the teen years.

"People can only build bones until about ages 30 to 35, and the rapid growth during the teen years is important," Cheryl Hughes, a nutritionist, based in Ormond Beach, Florida, tells *Choices*. "After the teen years, you will never have the chance again to make your bones the strongest they can be."

Almost half of your bone mass is formed when you are a teenager. If you don't get your calcium during this time in your life, you risk developing osteopenia (minor bone loss) or, worse, osteoporosis (significant bone loss, which increases the risk of breaking bones). Why? Your calcium-starved body will suck calcium from the only place it can find it—your bones.

And calcium does more than strengthen bones. It helps blood clot, so when you have a cut, you'll stop bleeding. Calcium also assists in making the nerves and muscles in your body work properly.

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Here are tips for teens on how to get more calcium into their bodies:

**1 DRINK MILK.** Milk is the best source of calcium. If you don't like milk, or think it's boring, try adding a small amount of chocolate or strawberry syrup to your milk to make it taste more like a treat. Other tasty foods with milk: a lowfat milkshake, lowfat ice cream, yogurt, and frozen yogurt.

**2 EAT CHEESE.** Milk is a main ingredient in cheese. This is good news for all you pizza lovers.

**3 EAT LEAFY GREENS, SALMON, FIGS, WHITE AND RED BEANS, ALMONDS, CHICKPEAS, AND BROCCOLI.** All contain calcium.

**4 DRINK ORANGE JUICE.** Just make sure that it's the kind that says "calcium fortified" on the container.

**5 TAKE A CALCIUM SUPPLEMENT WITH VITAMIN D.** Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. These days, calcium supplements even come in chewy forms and in flavors like Fudge Brownie. They are available in most drugstores. But make sure you check with your doctor before taking any supplement.

**6 AVOID SUBSTANCE ABUSE.** Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes are both bad for you just by themselves. But in terms of calcium intake, alcohol and nicotine make it harder for your body to absorb calcium.

—Cara D'Amico

# CALCIUMContent

Below is a list of foods and their calcium content. Notice how many different types of food you can eat to get calcium into your body. Use the list to answer the questions. Write your answers on a separate piece of paper. Answers are in the Teacher's Edition.

Food	Calcium (in milligrams)
1 cup of steamed broccoli with 1 1/2 ounces of shredded low-fat cheddar cheese	372
1 medium slice of cheese pizza	315
1 cup of hot cocoa made with 1 cup of skim milk and 2 tablespoons of chocolate syrup	305
1 cup of skim milk	300
1 part-skim mozzarella string cheese stick	300
1/2 cup of vanilla ice cream	150
1 low-fat pudding cup	99
1 small plain bagel with cream cheese	83
1 regular package of milk chocolate M&Ms	81
2 cups of romaine lettuce with 1/2 cup of garbanzo beans	80
1 regular size Milky Way bar	78
4 fig-bar cookies	36
1 cup of spaghetti topped with 1/2 cup of tomato sauce	27
1 medium apple with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter	15
1 banana	7

**1** If you ate 1 cup of vanilla ice cream, would that give you the same amount of calcium as drinking 1 cup of skim milk? Which food do you think is better for your body? Why?

**2** How many Milky Way bars would you have to eat to get about the same amount of calcium that is in 1 medium slice of cheese pizza? If you were really hungry, which food would be better for you to eat? Why?

**3** Using the list, put together two meals that you would enjoy eating. Each meal must have a main dish, a drink, and a dessert. How many milligrams of calcium are in each of your meals?

Choices consulted the following resources for this story: Aerobics and Fitness Association of America/Gale Group; "Teens, Bones, and Calcium," *LookSmart*/American Fitness, 2001, www.americanfitness.com; Center For Young Women's Health/Children's Hospital Boston; "Calcium and Teens: How to Prevent Osteoporosis" and "Vitamin D: A Substitute for 'Teens,'" www.youngwomenshealth.com; Daniels, Stephen, "Teens Not Getting Sufficient Calcium," 2006, www.nutraingredients-usa.com; Davis, Elizabeth Boardman and Marie Froelich, "Teens Educate: Teens About Calcium Crisis," www.cabotcheese.com; Galvin, Mary, MD, "Calcium and Your Child," The Nemours Foundation, www.kidshealth.org; Greene, Alan, MD, "Calcium for Teens," 2000, www.drgreene.org; Hughes, Cheryl, MA, RD, LD/N, E-mail: imphue@and.ahce.org; Medical News Today; "New, First-of-its-Kind For Teens Needs Calcium-Deficient Girls 'Bone Up'," 2006, www.medicinenet.com; Milk Matters Calcium Education Campaign, www.milkandrib.gov/milk; Sizer, Francis, and Eleanor Whitney, *Nutrition: Concepts and Controversies*, 7th ed. Pub/West/Wadsworth—Pearson, 1997; Vetter, Joan, "American Teens Face Calcium Crisis," www.monmouth.army.mil.