

DELAWARE MODERN PEDIATRICS, P. A.

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Calcium and Milk

Children need calcium for proper bone growth, but many children do not receive sufficient calcium in their diet. The Institute of Medicine recommends calcium in the diet as follows:

1-3 years	500 mg	12-16 ounces milk per day
4-8 years	800 mg	16-24 ounces milk per day
9-18 years	1300 mg	4 cups milk per day
19-50 years	1000 mg	

An 8-ounce glass of milk contains 250-300 mg. Dairy products like yogurt and cheese are other good sources, as are orange juice or soy milk with added calcium (check the label). Broccoli and other dark vegetables contain some calcium, but extremely large quantities (many cups) are required for significant calcium intake.

If the diet is deficient in calcium, Tums[®], Roloids[®], Viactiv[®], or other calcium supplement may be given each day to reach the recommended intake. (Adora[®] Dark Chocolate is a bit more expensive but very tasty; check on-line supplement stores for the best prices.)

Try keeping a food diary for a day, and add up the amount of calcium that your child usually gets in a day. Increase it if the targets above are not being reached.

Vitamin D is added to milk in sufficient quantities for good calcium absorption. But if most of the calcium in the diet is from other sources without Vitamin D, we recommend any non-prescription children's vitamin to be given daily.

We recommend that whole milk be given for all children ages 12-24 months. After the 2nd birthday, if there is a family history of high cholesterol or early heart disease, we suggest that you switch to low-fat milk.

Some people are lactose intolerant. If your child complains of abdominal cramps or diarrhea with milk, you might try Lactaid[®] milk or pills.

Soda is unfortunately popular with children and teenagers, but it tends to leach calcium from the bones and counteract the effect of dietary calcium. If soda is given, we suggest no more than 2 servings a week; even better, try to limit soda to special occasions.