

Going Strong

Eating right and being active: These are two key ingredients to good health for people of all ages. Over time, though, our bodies have different nutritional needs, so getting enough of some nutrients is especially important for good health. Milk and other dairy foods can provide these nutrients.

Calcium and Vitamin D

These two nutrients work together to build strong bones. Most of our bone mass is built in our teens and early twenties, so calcium needs are greatest then. But to maintain bone health, we also need more calcium and vitamin D as we age.

Calcium:

Women over the age of 50 and men over the age of 70 need 1,200 milligrams (mg) of calcium per day—an additional 200 mg a day.

How can you get this additional calcium? It doesn't take much, really. You could add just one of these choices to your diet each day:

- An 8-ounce (oz) glass of low-fat milk provides 300 mg of calcium
- A 1-oz serving of cheddar cheese provides 213 mg of calcium
- A 6-oz container of vanilla low-fat yogurt contains almost 300 mg of calcium

Protein

A common feature of getting older is a gradual loss of muscle mass and function. Loss of muscle can increase the risk of osteoporosis. But eating enough high-quality protein each day can help.



The current recommendation for protein is the same for all adults 19 years and older: About 56 grams per day for the average man and 46 grams per day for the average woman.

However, this is the minimum amount to avoid a protein deficiency. Some experts suggest that adults older than 65 years may benefit from eating more protein for optimal health and to help avoid the loss of muscle mass related to aging. Undernourished older adults may need almost twice as much protein as a healthy adult.

Dairy foods provide high quality protein, so if you are drinking or eating extra to meet your increased calcium and vitamin D needs, you will be getting additional protein, too.



Vitamin D:

Women and men over the age of 70 need 800 International Units (IU) of vitamin D per day—an additional 200 IU per day.

- Drinking an additional 8-oz glass of milk is your best bet towards meeting your vitamin D needs; it contains about 120 IU of this vitamin.
- Fatty fish, such as tuna or salmon, and fortified cereals are other good food sources of vitamin D.

How Dairy Helps

Dairy foods can help meet calcium, vitamin D and protein needs.



1 cup of reduced-fat milk

- 300 mg calcium
- 99 IU vitamin D
- 8 g protein



8 ounces of low-fat vanilla yogurt

- 388 mg calcium
- 2 IU vitamin D
- 11 g protein



1 ounce cheddar cheese

(approximately the size of 2 playing dice)

- 200 mg calcium
- 7 g protein

The Dairy Advantage

Dairy foods such as milk, cheese and yogurt also contain other nutrients your body needs every day, such as B vitamins, phosphorous and high-quality protein (the type of protein that contains all nine essential amino acids and is most efficiently digested and absorbed by the body).

Eat protein foods throughout the day for better muscle growth and repair.

- Start the day with a breakfast of cereal and milk, or a smoothie made with milk and fruit.
- Enjoy a grilled cheese sandwich at lunch, or a creamy soup made with milk.
- Eat a yogurt for a mid-day snack.
- Drink milk with meals.



Stay Active

Daily physical activity and strength training help prevent muscle loss as we get older. Here are three steps to stay active and healthy. Make sure to consult your doctor before starting any exercise routine, though.



1. Aim for at least 30 minutes per day of physical activity that increases your heart rate.
2. Add balance activities. Try rising up and down on your toes or walk a straight line heel to toe.
3. Make muscle-strengthening activities part of your weekly routine. Do arm curls with weights or use elastic bands to strengthen your shoulders or chest.

Stay Hydrated

Drinking enough fluids to stay hydrated is important as we get older, since the body's ways of detecting dehydration decrease. For example, older adults have decreased thirst signals. Dehydration can cause weakness, dizziness and tiredness.

Milk is a great option for staying hydrated. Not only does it provide fluid, it also contains 9 other essential nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D and protein.

Resources:

United Dairy Industry of Michigan, www.MilkMeansMore.org
National Dairy Council, www.NationalDairyCouncil.org
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, www.EatRight.org

For more information, visit www.MilkMeansMore.org.