



Teens and Building Bones - Staying Healthy for a Lifetime



There is new concern that teenagers, especially girls, are not drinking enough milk to get the necessary calcium to develop strong bones and prevent bone fractures. Soda consumption, especially the cola drinks, is thought to be a major factor.

Soda (colas) vs. Milk.....

- Studies have shown that active girls who drink cola drinks are five times more likely to have bone fractures than girls who did not drink soda.
- Colas – both regular and “diet” contain phosphoric acids which affect calcium metabolism and bone mass development.
- The phosphoric acid in soda can cause calcium to be taken from bones. Phosphoric acid can also keep calcium from being absorbed by our bodies.
- Another reason for this bone loss may be that young people are replacing milk with soda, giving their growing bodies less calcium during their critical bone forming years.
- The high consumption of soda and the declining consumption of milk by girls and women are creating a public health concern because they are susceptible to osteoporosis later in life.
- **Osteoporosis** means porous bones due to severe bone loss. Women who develop osteoporosis have weaker bones and are much more susceptible to bone fractures as they get older. Their jaws can also lose bone mass making them susceptible to bacteria that cause gum disease and tooth loss.

Calcium Counts.....

- Bones are living structures that need calcium to develop and stay strong. Without calcium, bones can become fragile and break easily.
- Eating and drinking foods with calcium during childhood and especially during the bone growing years between 9-18, can build up a child’s “bone bank” to store calcium for later in life.
- Calcium also keeps teeth and gums healthy by helping them develop properly, remain strong, and resist decay. Calcium is also important in preventing gum disease and tooth loss later in life.
- Kids and teens ages 9-18 need around 1300 mg of calcium per day. That’s equal to 3-4 servings of dairy foods a day.
- Most girls ages 9-19 get only 19% of the recommended amount of calcium per day.
- Boys ages 9-19 get 52% of the recommended amount of calcium.
- Calcium from dairy foods is absorbed easily by the body so it is the best source of calcium for most people.
- Other sources of calcium are dark green leafy vegetables, fortified orange juice, rice, almonds, tofu, and beans.

Tips you can do now to build healthy teeth and bones for a lifetime.

1. Eat a balanced diet. Increase calcium from an early age to ensure maximum bone density.
2. Drink soda in moderation.
3. Drink low-fat milk three times a day.
4. Exercise often with weight-bearing activities like walking and jogging.
5. Yogurt cups, yogurt drinks and low-fat cheeses are good sources of calcium.
6. Don’t smoke or drink alcohol.