



Bones, strength, health

Building strong bones with food

For many children and teens, being active is an important part of daily life. We want to make sure they are strong enough to keep it up! That's why Cook Children's Orthopedic and Sports Medicine dietitian wants to educate and encourage eating healthy foods that strengthen your child's bones and prevent injuries. Here are five important nutrients that can help strengthen your child's bones.

Calcium

Calcium is one of the main nutrients your body needs to build and maintain strong bones and carry out many important functions of the body. Examples include calcium-containing dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt, as well as fortified orange juice, fortified milk alternatives (soy, rice and almond milks), fortified cereal, soybeans, broccoli and fortified tofu.

Vitamin D

This is a nutrient that helps the body absorb calcium. Vitamin D can be made by the body from sunlight or can be consumed through a few food sources. Rich vitamin D foods are cod liver oil, egg yolk, swordfish, salmon, tuna, fortified milk and yogurt. Many children do not get enough Vitamin D and may need a supplement. Make sure to ask your physician or dietitian if your child needs supplements.

Protein

Protein is another main ingredient that makes up bone. Therefore, it is important for your child to eat plenty of protein to strengthen the bones. Make sure your child has a protein with at least 3 meals per day. Protein foods include beef, chicken, turkey, seafood, low-fat dairy products (milk, cheese and yogurt), nuts, beans, seeds and whole grains.

Potassium

Potassium helps the body hold on to calcium. Your child needs 4-5 servings of potassium-rich fruits and vegetables per day. Examples are dark leafy greens, kiwi, banana, avocado, Brussels sprouts, potatoes, corn, spinach, tomatoes, oranges, dried fruit, pomegranate, cantaloupe and honeydew.

Sodium

Too much sodium decreases the calcium in your child's body. Limit foods with high sodium in your child's diet. Food sources include table salt, fast food, canned foods (vegetables, meats and soups), deli meat, cured meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs and pepperoni), cereals, quick bread, packaged rice or pasta, cheeses, condiments and frozen meals. You can find the amount of sodium per serving on the nutrition facts label of any packaged food.

Frankie Kindy, MS, RD, LD is a registered dietitian, licensed by the state of Texas. She has advanced training in nutrition and experience personal training children and teenagers. Frankie specializes in nutrition issues related to sports. She too was an athlete growing up, which helps her better treat each individual athlete with personalized goals and recommendations.

To schedule an appointment with our registered dietitian for personalized nutrition recommendations for your little athlete, please contact Cook Children's Orthopedics at 682-885-4405.



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