

# W I C *Tribune*

Onondaga County Health Department WIC Program Newsletter

## *Nutrition Spotlight* **Calcium and Vitamin D: The Recipe for Healthy Bones**

### *Why do we need calcium?*

June is National Dairy Month. It is important to remember that dairy foods provide our bodies with the best form of calcium. Calcium is a mineral that keeps bones and teeth healthy and strong. It is also needed for our heart, muscles, and nerves to work, and for blood clotting. Calcium may even help prevent some cancers and high blood pressure. We need calcium no matter how old we are.

### *How much calcium do we need?*

We need calcium throughout our lives. The amount of calcium you need depends on your age. Calcium needs are highest for growing teenagers, especially pregnant/breastfeeding teens because most of all bone forms during the teen years. As we continue to age, our bones start to lose calcium. Eating calcium-rich foods along with regular physical activity can help slow the rate of bone loss over time. It is important to eat plenty of calcium-rich foods to maintain your calcium stores in the body. Children ages 1-3 require 500 mg/day, 4-8 years 800 mg/day, 9-18 years 1,300 mg/day, 19-50 years 1,000 mg/day, pregnant/breastfeeding teenagers (<18 years) 1,300 mg/day, and pregnant/breastfeeding women (>18 years) 1,000 mg/day.

### *What are good sources of calcium?*

Most children 2 to 5 years old need 2 cups of milk and dairy foods each day. Dairy foods are the best sources of calcium because this calcium is easily absorbed in the body. These foods also provide protein, riboflavin, vitamin B12, vitamin D, zinc, and other nutrients.

**Milk:** The most well known source of calcium that can be added to your diet. Milk is fortified with Vitamin D, which is needed for calcium absorption. Whole, 2%, 1% low fat, and fat free milk provide the same nutrition; yet vary in fat and calorie content. Whole milk is best for children under age 2. The fat content of dairy products is a concern for adults and children

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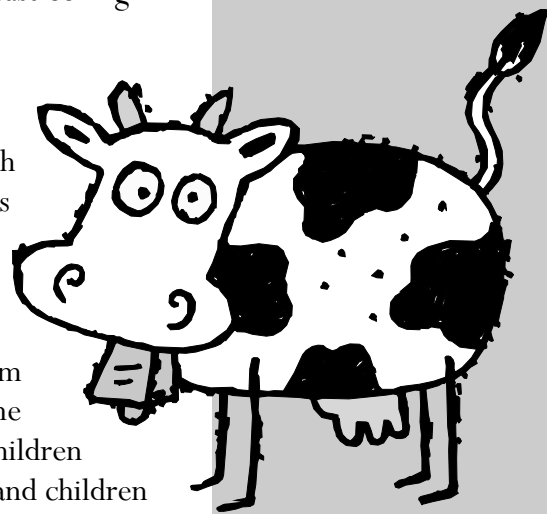
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### **Nutrition Tidbit:**

- Most children 2 to 5 years old need 2 cups of milk and dairy foods each day.



## *Nutrition Spotlight, continued*

over 2, therefore 1% or fat free milk is recommended. The calcium content is not affected by removing the fat.

**Other dairy products:** Cheese and yogurt are great sources of calcium and are available in low-fat and fat-free options. Although ice cream is a dairy product, it provides less calcium than other sources, and contains higher amounts of sugar and fat. Ice cream is good as an occasional treat.

**Green leafy vegetables:** Broccoli, collard greens, kale, turnip greens, Swiss chard, and bok choy are good sources of calcium. These sources also contribute to your daily vegetable intake and contain other vitamins and minerals to help keep you healthy and give you energy! Remember you can buy any of these items with your fruit and vegetable WIC checks.

**Calcium-fortified foods:** Calcium is added to many foods, including breads, orange juice, soy or rice milk, corn tortillas, and tofu, making these foods good sources of calcium for those who do not drink milk or have problems digesting lactose, the natural sugar in milk. Keep in mind these sources vary in the amount of calcium your baby absorbs compared to dairy products.

**Beans and peas:** Navy beans, soybeans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, black beans, lentils, and split peas contain calcium, however they also contain a substance called oxalates that may interfere with calcium absorption.

**Supplements:** Talk with your physician before taking any calcium supplements or giving them to your children. Your WIC nutritionist can help assess you or your child's diet for dietary calcium intake.



### *What if we do not get enough calcium or vitamin D?*

Ensuring that we get enough calcium for our bones and teeth is important throughout life. Without enough calcium, the body begins to remove it from our bones to maintain the amount of calcium in our blood. Over time, this can result in weak, brittle bones, or osteoporosis. It is important to boost your calcium intake early in life in order to slow this process. Lack of vitamin D can cause soft, weak bones in children. Low calcium levels are also related to high blood lead levels in the body. Thus, it is important to get enough calcium in your diet!

### *What is vitamin D's role in calcium absorption?*

Vitamin D is a vitamin that comes from sunlight and some food sources, which helps the body absorb and use calcium. The body makes vitamin D in response to the sun's rays. It is recommended to get at least 15 minutes a day outside with hands and face exposed. Good food sources of vitamin D include fortified dairy products, fish, and eggs.

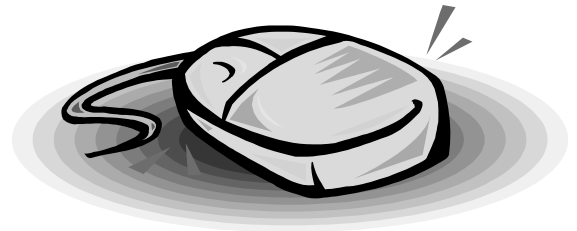
### *What are some ways to boost calcium and vitamin D intake?*

It is important to eat a balanced diet because too much protein and salt may make your body lose more calcium through the kidneys. Calcium and vitamin D can be added into our diet at any meal and during any time of the day. Here are some examples:

- For breakfast, mix oatmeal with milk instead of water.
- Make a yogurt parfait with your choice of yogurt, and berries. Top it off with delicious granola or whole grain cereal to add the final crunch.
- Try a smoothie as a morning treat or afternoon refresher: blend milk, yogurt, and a banana. Milk can be substituted for soy milk, rice milk, Lactaid, or calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Take calcium-rich snacks to school or work such as cubed cheese, pudding, or yogurt .
- Melt cheese on a soft whole grain tortilla and top with salsa for a tasty treat!
- Make a homemade pizza using low-fat cheese and top with veggies—don't forget the broccoli.

## Check out the WIC Program's Web Page!

The WIC Program has a web page that you should check out. Go to [www.ongov.net/health](http://www.ongov.net/health), click on Pregnancy/Early Childhood in the list on the left, then WIC. On our web page you can access a copy of the WIC Acceptable Foods Card, Acceptable Foods List for Vegetables & Fruits Checks, and the WIC Acceptable Foods Card Supplement. There is also a link to the WIC Breastfeeding web site, copies of the WIC and WIC Vendor Management newsletters as well as a link for doctors to access the Approved Formula list and the form necessary for doctors to complete when requesting a special formula. Have fun checking out WIC's web page!



## WIC News

- The WIC Program will be closed on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st.
- If you have a question, you can email the WIC office at [hlwicinfo@ongov.net](mailto:hlwicinfo@ongov.net).
- Remember to ask for a WIC Acceptable Food Card, Supplement to the WIC Food Card and the Acceptable Food List for Vegetables & Fruit Checks.
- Remember that to enroll on WIC or to receive your WIC checks and/or a new WIC ID card you must have photo ID or a WIC ID card.
- The New York State WIC Program has a new web page. You can view the new web page at [www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic](http://www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic) to see the many resources available.
- To help you spend the total amount on the WIC Vegetable and Fruit check, NYS WIC has revised the rule on cashing this **one** type of WIC check. If the amount goes over the “not to exceed amount” on a WIC Vegetable and Fruit check, you can pay the difference. As always, if it goes under the not to exceed amount you will not receive change.

## Don't Miss Your WIC Appointment...You May Get Less Food/Formula On Your WIC Checks!

The WIC program provides nutritious foods to supplement the diets of WIC participants. These foods are provided for the person enrolled on WIC. Each set of WIC checks are to provide food over a 30 day period. **If you miss your WIC appointment you may receive less food/formula on your WIC checks.** When checks are picked up after the "Not Good Before" (NGB) date you may receive less food/formula on your WIC checks. If you need to miss your WIC appointment call the office as soon as possible to reschedule the missed appointment.

## Here's What's Cooking



### Breakfast Burritos

#### Ingredients

- 6 eggs\*
- 1 green or red bell pepper, chopped in ½ inch pieces\*
- ½ can diced green chiles, drained (optional)
- 1 T olive oil (more or less, depending on your pan)
- salt & pepper to taste
- 6 whole wheat tortillas\*
- 1 cup grated cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese\*
- light sour cream, for serving
- salsa, for serving

#### How to Prepare

Heat small amount of olive oil in a non-stick skillet, then add diced peppers and sauté until slightly soft, about 3-4 minutes. Add green chiles and seasonings and sauté about 2 minutes more.

While peppers are cooking, break eggs into mixing bowl and whisk until whites and yolks are completely combined. Add a little more olive oil to frying pan. Add beaten eggs, and immediately lower heat and cook until eggs are barely set, gently stirring and scraping side of pan with rubber scraper the entire time, about 8 minutes. They should be slightly wet-looking when you turn off heat.

Inside each warmed tortilla put a line of egg mixture, top with cheese, sour cream, and salsa. Fold together and enjoy.

*\*WIC Foods*

### Onondaga County Health Department WIC Program

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Standards for participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, political beliefs or sex.



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[www.ongov.net](http://www.ongov.net)