

Using the Bone Building Foods Chart

Goal

Those 4-8 years old should consume 800 mg of calcium each day.

This is the equivalent of 10 points on the Bone Building Foods chart.

Those 9-18 years old should consume 1300 mg of calcium each day.

This is the equivalent of 16 points on the Bone Building Foods chart.



Directions

Post the Bone Building Foods Chart in your room. Foods in each of the 3 columns are assigned 1, 3 or 6 points based on their calcium content. Participants earn points each time they consume these foods in the specified amounts. The goal is to collect 16 points every day. Encourage participants to make calcium-rich choices as part of meals and snacks throughout the day. Give participants one or more opportunities throughout the day to update progress in their *Personal Record Keeper*, e.g. first thing in the morning, right before lunch, right before dismissal.

Why is nutrition important?

Calcium and other nutrients, such as protein and phosphorus, become the building material for bone.

If dietary calcium intake is low, calcium is withdrawn from bone to ensure there is enough to supply other vital body functions. Consuming enough calcium during childhood is important to help maximize bone building.

The best source of calcium is food: Bone, like other tissue, requires balanced nutrition. Milk products such as milk, cheese and yogurt contain the largest amounts of calcium per serving, in addition to other bone building nutrients. Milk is particularly important, as it is also a good food source of vitamin D, which is essential for calcium absorption. If choosing a calcium-fortified beverage, be sure it also contains vitamin D. Other foods contain calcium in smaller amounts as well as other nutrients that are important to bone building.

Alarmingly, numerous studies show that many boys and girls do not consume enough bone building nutrients, especially calcium.