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FOODS FOR BONE HEALTH

Celebrate May, National Osteoporosis Prevention Month, by getting your bone density measured and eating foods rich in calcium and vitamin D . Osteoporosis affects ten million people. Eighty percent are women. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, 50% of women and 25% of men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. One in five people with a hip fracture will end up in a nursing home within a year according to the Surgeon General.

Good food sources are:

- Milk – whole, 2%, 1%, skim, buttermilk or chocolate. All provide around 300 mg of calcium in an 8 ounce glass. You can also purchase milks fortified with extra calcium. All milk products have Vitamin D added.
- Cheese – the amount of calcium varies depending on the type. Highest in calcium is ricotta (1/2 cup) and parmesan (1 oz. hard), both provide 336 mg. Swiss, provolone, Monterey, cheddar, and Muenster all have over 200 mg per ounce and are listed in descending order. Brick, Roquefort, mozzarella, blue, feta, and camembert have less.
- Yogurt – be sure to read the label as they vary greatly between manufacturers. Look for yogurts with Vitamin D added. Plain yogurt is the best choice; one cup provides as much calcium as a glass of milk.
- Orange juice with added calcium has as much calcium as a cup of milk.
- Soy and rice beverages with added calcium – depending on the brand they have 150-300 mg calcium in one cup. Be sure to check the label since these drinks do not naturally have calcium like milk and it must be added to the product by the manufacturer.
- Frozen yogurt which has 200 mg calcium in one cup.
- Vegetables like collard greens, turnip greens, kale and broccoli are good sources. Collards have 180 mg in 1/2 cup, turnip greens have 99 mg, kale has 90 mg, and broccoli has 45 mg.
- Canned salmon and sardines, with edible bones are excellent sources

Vitamin D is required for calcium absorption and bone health. Your body can manufacture Vitamin D from exposure to the sun. Make getting out in the sun daily for 5 to 15 minutes a priority to make sure your body has ample Vitamin D. During the winter months when sunlight is weak you can get your vitamin D from foods that have been fortified like milk and breakfast cereals.

MOCHA MUDSLIDE

1 cup skim milk
2/3 cup sliced ripe banana
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
1 cup vanilla low-fat frozen yogurt
Banana slices (optional)
1-2 cups ice

Place all ingredients in a blender; process until slushy. Garnish with sliced banana, if desired. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. Note: For a chocolate flavored shake, use reduced-fat chocolate milk instead of the plain skim milk, and reduce the sugar to 1/2 tablespoon. One serving provides 240mg calcium.

STRAWBERRY BANANA SMOOTHIE

1 cup plain or vanilla yogurt
6 frozen strawberries
1 banana frozen - cut in chunks prior to freezing
Sugar or artificial sweetener (optional)

Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth and serve. Makes 2 servings. For sweeter taste add sugar or artificial sweetener. One serving provides 150mg calcium.

SANTA FE GRANDE

4 cups skim milk
1 (1 1/4 ounce) package taco seasoning mix
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
1 cup quick-cooking grits OR quick-cooking polenta mix
1 (4 1/2 ounce) can chopped green chiles
1 1/4 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese (5 ounces)
2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons chopped green onion
1 cup salsa, taco sauce, reduced-fat dairy sour cream and/or chopped tomato

In a large saucepan combine milk, taco seasoning mix, butter and hot pepper sauce; cook over medium heat just until boiling. Gradually add grits or polenta mix, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring constantly, for 4 to 5 minutes or until mixture is very thick. Remove from heat and stir in green chilies. Pour mixture into a greased 9x13-inch square baking dish. Cool slightly. Cover and chill in refrigerator 4 to 24 hours or until firm.

Uncover dish and invert onto a large cutting board. Cut grits mixture to make 16 triangles total. Arrange triangles in the same baking dish, overlapping as necessary. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake in a 400° oven about 25 minutes or until hot and cheese is melted. Let stand for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro and green onion. Serve with salsa, taco sauce, sour cream, and/or tomato. Makes 8 servings. One serving provides 286mg calcium.

SPINACH AND PASTA ROLLS

12 packaged dried lasagna noodles
2 1/4 cups skim milk
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon finely snipped fresh basil
1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach
1 beaten egg
1 1/4 cups ricotta cheese
3 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion
Nonstick spray coating
Chopped tomatoes (optional)
Fresh herb (optional)

Cook lasagna noodles according to package directions. Drain; rinse with cold water; drain well. Set aside.

For sauce, in a medium saucepan combine fat free milk, cornstarch, and nutmeg. Cook and stir over medium heat until bubbly. Cook and stir for 1 minute more. Remove from heat. Stir in Parmesan cheese and basil.

For filling, cook spinach according to package directions. Drain well, pressing out excess liquid with the back of a spoon. Stir together egg, ricotta cheese, cream cheese, and green onion. Add the spinach and 1/3 cup of the sauce; mix well. Set aside.

To assemble, spray a 3-quart rectangular baking dish with non-stick coating. Spread about 1/4 cup of the cheese mixture on a cooked noodle. Starting from a short end, roll up, jelly-roll style. Place pasta roll, seam side down, in prepared dish. Repeat with remaining noodles and cheese mixture. Pour remaining sauce over pasta rolls. Bake, uncovered, in a 350° oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until heated through. If desired, garnish with chopped tomato and fresh herb. Makes 6 servings . One serving provides 30% calcium.

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