

School News & Notes

Starting School With Strong Bones

(NAPSA)—Starting your child off on the right foot this school year takes more than just new clothes, a new backpack, school supplies and lunch money. With the beginning of school, kids' schedules get busier, they're more likely to grab meals on the go, and they'll be spending time sitting in class and in front of the computer doing homework. As a result, it gets harder to make sure they eat right and are physically active every day.

It is especially important for girls aged 9 through 12 to get enough foods with calcium in their daily diet and include weight-bearing physical activity in their daily activities. It may seem early to think about bone health, but girls as young as nine can do a lot to protect their bones from osteoporosis later in life. By encouraging your daughter to consume 1300 mg of calcium per day and participate in weight-bearing physical activities, you can help her build strong bones and develop lifelong healthy habits.

It is important for girls to make wise choices when eating at home and at school. Keep cereal bars with added calcium (approximately 200 mg of calcium) and low- or non-fat fruit yogurt cups (315 mg of calcium/cup) readily available for mornings when she's running late for school or the bus. Pack almonds (71 mg of calcium/1 oz) in her lunch bag for a snack, or make a sandwich on a whole-wheat English muffin (175 mg/1 muffin) with American cheese (348 mg/2 oz) and her favorite veggies. If your daughter eats lunch at school, look over the school lunch menu and help her pick out bone-building foods such as:

- A slice of cheese pizza (111 to 147 mg of calcium/slice)
- Broccoli (90 mg of calcium/cup)
- Pudding made with milk (147 to 160 mg of calcium/½ cup)



- Grilled cheese (371 mg/sandwich) and tomato soup made with milk

For more information about the calcium content of the lunches offered at your child's school, contact the school district's main office and ask to speak with the Food Service Director.

Also, encourage your daughter to try weight-bearing physical activities such as basketball, tennis, cheerleading, or tae kwon do when it's time to pick her after-school activities. At home, encourage her to take walks with family or friends, or simply turn on music in her bedroom and dance.

One good resource for girls who want to learn more about building strong bones is the "Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls™." Web site, www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones. Informative and fun, the site is dedicated to teaching girls the importance of strong bones. It's easy to navigate, and provides girls with examples of how to increase calcium intake and participate in weight-bearing physical activities. In addition to interactive games, the site includes great recipes girls can make for themselves and their friends, as well as ideas for how to get active and build healthy bones.

The National Bone Health Campaign, "Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls™" is a multi-year national campaign developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Osteoporosis Foundation.