



Did you know kids are not getting nearly enough calcium and vitamin D these days?

In fact, studies report that only one in 10 children get enough vitamin D and only one out of five get the recommended amounts of calcium. The risk grows for teens, who increasingly opt for soda and other sugary drinks over milk—at precisely the time when their bones and bodies are growing the fastest and need these vitamins and minerals the most.



Why promote milk over other forms of calcium? Although any source of calcium will count toward daily intake, low-fat milk is the most efficient and nutrient-dense source. In addition to calcium and vitamin D, milk provides vitamin A, protein, vitamin B12 and potassium. Lactose-free milk, soy, almond and rice drinks are acceptable alternatives. Calcium-fortified orange juice is a fine substitute; however, it lacks the vitamin D and protein kids get from milk. Yogurt has calcium and protein but not the vitamin D.

So, how do you get kids to drink their milk? For younger kids, fancy drink containers, fun straws, and old-school bribery might do the trick. Let kids add their own milk flavorings and stir with a tall spoon or mini whisk. For older kids and teens, provide a half gallon of low-fat milk and a range of ingredients (milk flavorings, frozen fruit for smoothies, etc) and let them get creative.

Squeeze in more milk servings each day by:

- Adding milk to mashed potatoes
- Adding powder or syrup to make flavored milk
- Making milkshakes or smoothies with milk
- Adding extra milk and cheese to macaroni and cheese
- Suggesting bowls of cereal with milk as an after-school snack
- Serving hot chocolate with marshmallows! (Tip: even if you use a mix, make it with real milk, not hot water)
- Making oatmeal or hot cereal with milk, not water