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# Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES

June

A Newsletter from the EFNEP/SCNEP Programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension

Welcome to the June Issue of **Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES**. By now children are out of school and perhaps getting more physical activity. Hopefully, you are finding it easier to get out in the fresh air and get more exercise yourself. You might want to consider taking your children to a park or the local elementary school to have active fun together. June is National Dairy Month. This is a good time to think about all the benefits of milk and other calcium-rich foods. This newsletter is packed with good information about the benefits of dairy foods and how to prevent a bone disease, osteoporosis. It also contains some delicious milk and cheese recipes.



**MyPyramid.gov**  
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



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**Virginia Cooperative Extension**

*Knowledge for the Commonwealth*



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## Nutrition and Health Tips for Today

**Get your calcium-rich foods.** It is important to get enough calcium at every age. Children need calcium to build strong bones and teeth. Adults need calcium to keep their bones and teeth strong as they age.

The Milk Group of *MyPyramid* is the best source of calcium and vitamin D. Foods in this group are good sources of protein, potassium, and B vitamins. Children ages 2 to 8 years need 2 cups of milk each day. All others from age 9 years and up need 3 cups of milk a day. One cup of yogurt; 1 1/2 ounces of cheddar, Swiss, or Mozzarella cheese; or 2 ounces American cheese are equal to 1 cup of milk in calcium and other nutrients.

If you have “lactose intolerance,” you can use lactose-free milk that is available in most grocery stores. Hard cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt should not be a problem, since the lactose in these foods has already been broken down.

When choosing milk and milk products, it is best to go fat-free or low-fat. Most grocery stores have a variety of fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. Limit foods like whole milk and full-fat cheese and ice cream. These are high in saturated fat. Saturated fat may raise the “bad” LDL cholesterol in your blood, leading to clogged arteries and heart disease.

If you don't eat milk products, you can get your calcium from these foods:

- Calcium-fortified juices, cereal, breads, and soy or rice drinks.
- Canned fish like sardines or salmon with the bones.
- Soybeans, soy yogurt, soymilk, and dried beans
- Dark leafy greens (collards, turnip, kale, bok choy, and spinach).

## Staying Healthy for a Lifetime

### Preventing osteoporosis (OSS-tee-oh-pore-OH-sis).

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that affects many older adults. In this disease, there is a severe loss of bone thickness and structure. Bones become porous, thin, and brittle.

### Risk factors for osteoporosis:

- Taking in too little calcium in early life; reaching age 30 with too little calcium in bones
- Fast loss of calcium from bones with menopause due to sudden drop in estrogen
- Being female and White or Asian
- Having small bones
- Having family members with the disease
- Being underweight or constantly dieting to lose weight
- Too little physical activity
- Low calcium and vitamin D intake
- Excessive intake of salt and meat
- Smoking and/or drinking too much alcohol

### Some effects of osteoporosis:

- As bones in spine become thin and soft, the person begins to stoop. Eventually lungs and organs don't have room to work properly.
- Bones break easily, especially in hips, legs, and arms

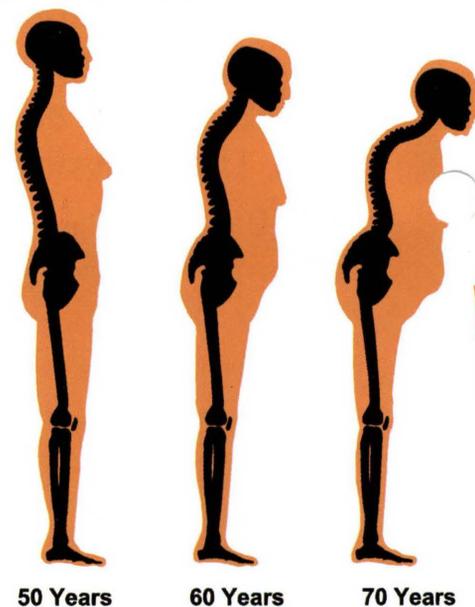
### Ways to prevent osteoporosis:

- Avoid very strict weight-loss diets. Instead, follow an eating plan, based on recommended amounts of food

from *MyPyramid*.

Call the local or toll-free number on back of this newsletter to get a copy. Do not go below 1,500 calories. If you cannot lose weight, increase your physical activity.

- If near menopause, ask your doctor about medications to prevent bone loss.
- Get at least 30 minutes of weight-bearing physical activity a day (See “Staying Fit”).
- If you smoke, try to stop, or at least cut down.
- Eat more calcium-rich foods with vitamin D.
- By age 50, consider taking calcium pills with vitamin D.
- Limit salt to 1 teaspoon and meat to 5 1/2 ounces per day.
- Eat/drink low-fat milk products, skim milk, buttermilk, low-fat cheeses, and yogurt.
- Limit alcoholic beverages to 1 per day or 7 per week.
- If age 50 or older, ask your doctor about a bone-density test.



**50 Years      60 Years      70 Years**  
Osteoporosis causes bones to weaken and deform over time.

## Staying Fit and Having Fun

**Physical activity for strong bones.** In addition to getting the right nutrients, one of the best ways of building strong bones, and keeping them strong, is to get daily physical activity. Weight-bearing physical activity places stress on bones and muscles, making them grow stronger.

Examples of weight-bearing physical activity:

- Walking
- Dancing
- Bicycling
- Hiking
- Jumping rope
- Jogging
- Playing sports
- Weight lifting

As you can see, something as simple as standing and putting one foot in front of the other can help build strong bones. There are options without having to join a gym!

**What is involved in weight lifting and how does it make bones strong?** Weight lifting is often called strength training or resistance training. This is different from “body building,” which involves lifting *heavy* weights. To do weight lifting, you can use a variety of things, such as weight machines, small dumbbells, cans of soup, or even books. The important thing is that “resistance” or “stress” is placed on the bones and muscles. Over time, this makes them become stronger.

Weight-bearing physical activity improves posture and strengthens bones and muscles. Physical activity also lowers “bad” cholesterol, blood pressure, and body fat. It also improves blood flow and may help prevent heart disease and certain cancers. It also improves mood, self-esteem and quality of life. You can see why weight-bearing physical activity can be great for the bones, your emotions, and your entire body. So, why not get up and get going – for the health of it?

## Children’s Corner

“But, Mom, I don’t like milk!!!” Do you hear this often? If so, getting your children to drink more milk can be a challenge. Here are some tips that might help.

**D**rink milk with meals.

**R**ole model: If your children see you drinking milk, they will be more likely to drink it too.

**I**ncentives: Reward your child with stickers or some other non-food item when they reach the goal of 3 servings of milk in a day.

**N**ew Flavors: Think about flavoring milk with a little strawberry, chocolate, banana, or butterscotch syrup, but don’t over do it.

**K**ick up the afternoon snack: Encourage children to eat milk foods as snacks.



Milk, cheese, and yogurt are foods loaded with protein, vitamins, calcium, potassium, and other minerals necessary for growing bodies. Calcium-rich milk is the most reliable source for bone-building nutrients. Children (2 to 8 years) should drink 2 cups per day while teens should drink 3 cups. Remember to select 1% or 2% low-fat milk and low-fat or fat-free cheese and yogurt.

Yogurt can be used to make this strawberry smoothie that is full of nutrients.

### Strawberry Smoothie

(Makes 4 1/2-cup servings.)

- 1/2 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt (can use plain milk)
- 1 teaspoon sugar, optional
- 4 to 5 ice cubes

Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until frothy.

## Keeping Food Safe

**Keeping milk and meat products safe to eat.** Dairy goods (milk products) and meats need care to ensure that they are safe to eat and will not cause food poisoning. *Listeria* is one type of bacteria that can be a problem with milk and meat products. It can grow even in refrigerated foods. *Listeria* causes food poisoning if its numbers grow to a high level.

It is especially harmful to pregnant women, older adults, and people with weak immune systems. It can cause pregnant women to miscarry and infants to become very ill and possibly die.

Stop or slow the growth of *Listeria* by the following actions:

- Store milk, cheeses, and other dishes made with milk or meat in the refrigerator. Do not allow them to sit on the counter or table for long and definitely not more than 2 hours.
- Clean your refrigerator often.
- Use a refrigerator thermometer to insure that refrigerator is at 40 degrees or lower.
- Do not use “raw” milk or raw milk products.
- Keep cheese and cheese dishes covered with plastic wrap to reduce mold growth.

- Pay attention to “Sell-by” or “Use-by” dates on milk and meat products.
- Always go by the 4 “C’s:”
  - **Clean:** Wash hands and surfaces often.
  - Separate - don’t **Cross-contaminate.**
  - **Cook** to proper temperature.
  - **Chill** promptly in refrigerator. Do not eat or serve perishable foods that have been left out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.



**Special precautions: Pregnant women, older adults, and those with weak immune systems should NOT EAT the following:**

- Soft cheeses, such as feta, camembert, blue-veined cheese, queso fresco, queso blanca, and Panola, unless the label states that they made with pasteurized milk.
- *Uncooked* hot dogs and luncheon meat.
- Meat spreads from refrigerated section of grocery store. Canned meat spreads are safe to eat.

## Saving Money at the Grocery Store

**Buying milk and other dairy foods.** When buying milk and dairy foods, the following tips can help you make the best choices for saving money and good nutrition.

- When grocery shopping, pick-up dairy foods last. Go home immediately and put them in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Only buy milk and dairy products that are refrigerated and cold to touch.
- Only buy ice cream and other frozen foods if they are frozen hard.
- Check cartons for leaks or breaks. Don’t buy those with damaged cartons, even at a reduced price.
- Check the “Sell by” or “Use-by” date and make sure you can use the product before this date expires. The “Sell-by” date allows for 2 or 3 days of use beyond that date.
- Skim (non-fat) or low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, and reduced-fat cheeses are recommended for most people after age 2. These choices help to limit calories and saturated fat. In some cases, skim or low-fat fluid milk may

be cheaper than the whole or full-fat version. Also, consider buying reduced-fat or fat-free versions of ice cream. They often taste just as good and are better for health.

- Canned, evaporated milk may be less expensive than fresh milk and is great for cooking. The low-fat or fat-free version is recommended. Be sure to check the “sell-by” date.
- Milk in gallons is a better buy than smaller sizes if your family can use it before it spoils. The same is true of larger containers of yogurt and cottage cheese.
- Plain, non-fat yogurt is cheaper than the flavored varieties. You can add your own flavorings, such as vanilla or chopped fresh, canned, or frozen fruit. Add a small amount of artificial sweetener and you have a great low-calorie dessert.
- Pre-sliced, individually wrapped cheese and pre-shredded cheeses are more expensive than blocks of cheese.
- Sharp cheddar cheese is more expensive than medium sharp, which is more expensive than mild.

## Cooking Corner

### Stuffed Tomatoes

(This calcium rich recipe is great to make in the summer.)

(Makes 4 servings)

#### Ingredients:

- 4 large ripe tomatoes
- 1 16-ounce container low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 cup grated low-fat sharp cheese
- 8 green olives chopped
- 4 tablespoons toasted sunflower or sesame seeds
- Black pepper to taste

#### Directions:

1. Wash each tomato and hollow out the center leaving about a 1/4-inch rim.
2. Mix together cottage cheese, grated cheese, and olives.
3. Fill each tomato shell with the cheese-olive mixture. Add dash of black pepper to the top of each tomato.
4. Sprinkle top of each with 1 tablespoon of sunflower or sesame seeds.
5. Serve with whole-wheat crackers.

### Kids in the Kitchen

(a recipe for kids to prepare with help of an adult)

### The Power Shake

(Makes 2 servings.)

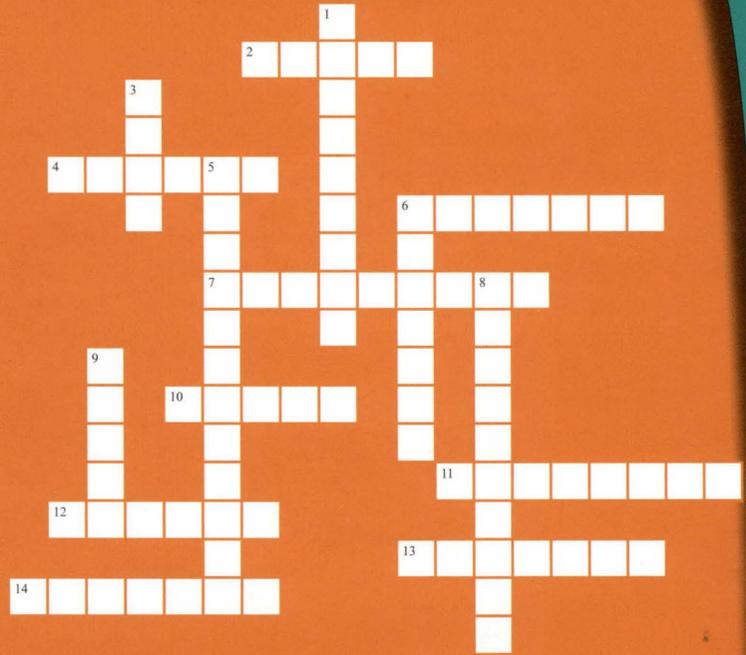
#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup chilled pineapple juice or orange juice
- 1/3 cup non-fat dry milk powder
- 1 cup cracked ice
- 1 teaspoon sugar or sugar substitute
- 1/2 cup frozen strawberries

#### Directions:

1. Blend all ingredients in a blender at high speed until thick and foamy.
2. Pour into two glasses, and serve immediately.

## June Crossword Puzzle



### Across

2. Saturated fat may lead to \_\_\_\_\_ disease.
4. Buy milk in \_\_\_\_\_ containers to save money if your family can use it before it spoils.
6. Foods in the milk group are good sources of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Pre-sliced, individually wrapped cheese and pre-shredded cheeses are more \_\_\_\_\_ than blocks of cheese.
10. Weight lifting makes \_\_\_\_\_ and muscles become stronger.
11. Choose milk, and milk products that are \_\_\_\_\_.
12. You can buy yogurt and \_\_\_\_\_ that are fat-free.
13. An example of weight-bearing physical activity is \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Hard cheese is a good source of dairy if you are "\_\_\_\_\_ intolerant."

### Down

1. Whole milk is high in \_\_\_\_\_ fat.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ group is the best source of calcium and vitamin D.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is a bone disease that affects many older adults.
6. Weight-bearing physical activity improves \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Calcium is in foods like dark, leafy \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Calcium builds strong bones and \_\_\_\_\_.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

## June Crossword Puzzle Answers:

### Across

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 2. heart     | 11. fat-free |
| 4. gallon    | 12. cheese   |
| 6. protein   | 13. walking  |
| 7. expensive | 14. lactose  |
| 10. bones    |              |

### Down

1. saturated
3. milk
5. osteoporosis
6. posture
8. vegetables
9. teeth

For more information on food, nutrition,  
and achieving a healthy weight, contact:

Or call this toll-free number: 1-888-814-7627

If you have access to the Internet, go to these sites:

Healthy Futures Series: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/healthyfutures>  
MyPyramid Food Guide: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>  
Food Stamps in Virginia: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/foodstamp.html>

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The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low incomes. It can help you buy nutritious foods for healthy eating. To learn how to apply, call your local county or city **Department of Social Services** (listed under city/county government in phone book). For help in finding the correct local number, call this toll-free number: **1-800-552-3431** (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays). By calling the local DSS office, you can get other useful information about services you may need.

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