



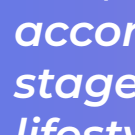
MEDIA RELEASE

An initiative by the Consumer Education Project of Milk SA

Everyday dairy for lifelong bone health

We build, maintain and preserve the health of our bones throughout our lifetime. Bone health is shaped by the daily choices we make about nutrition, physical activity and lifestyle - from childhood right through to older age. Strong bones are one of the most crucial foundations for healthy ageing, impacting on long-term mobility and independence.

According to Maretha Vermaak, Registered Dietitian at Rediscover Dairy, nutrition is foundational for lifelong bone health. She says, "It's important to consider that bones are living tissue that, like muscles and skin, change according to life stage and lifestyle habits. What we eat, how active we are and even exposure to sunlight all play an important role in helping bones stay strong over time."



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This World Milk Day, celebrated on 1 June 2026, Rediscover Dairy encourages South Africans to focus on three key actions that can make a meaningful difference to bone health:

consuming dairy foods every day, keeping bones active through weight-bearing exercise and getting safe sunlight exposure for vitamin D.

Consuming dairy foods every day

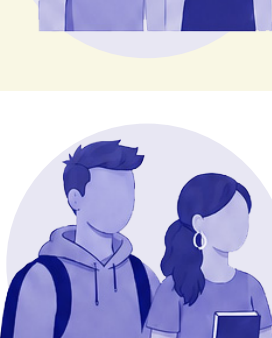
Calcium is essential for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, and dairy foods are one of the most effective and accessible ways to help meet daily calcium needs. Milk, maas, yoghurt and cheese naturally provide calcium in a form the body can absorb and use efficiently.



But dairy offers more than calcium alone. The dairy matrix, the unique combination of nutrients naturally found in dairy foods, also delivers protein, phosphorus, magnesium and other nutrients that work together to support bone development and maintenance.

How much calcium do we need each day?

Daily calcium needs by age group



Children 4-8 years
1,000 mg Calcium/Day

About 3-4 dairy servings a day
Growing bones need a strong calcium foundation



3-4 servings

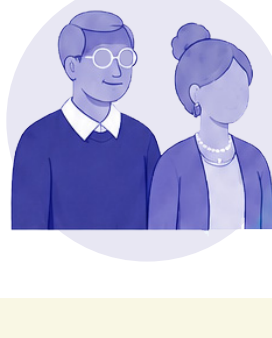


Teens 9 - 19 years
1,300 mg Calcium/Day

About 4-5 dairy servings a day
These are peak bone-building years



4-5 servings

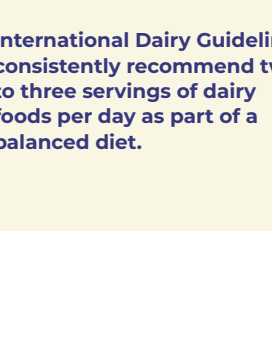


Most adults
1,000 mg Calcium/Day

About 3-4 dairy servings a day
Adults still need calcium to maintain healthy bones

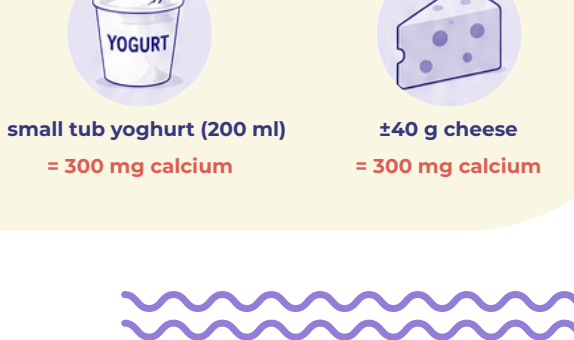


3-4 servings



Older adults
1,200 mg Calcium/Day

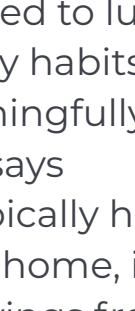
About 4 dairy servings a day
Needs increase as bone density begins to decline



4 servings

International Dairy Guidelines

International Dairy Guidelines consistently recommend two to three servings of dairy foods per day as part of a balanced diet.



1 cup milk or maas (250 ml)
= 300 mg calcium



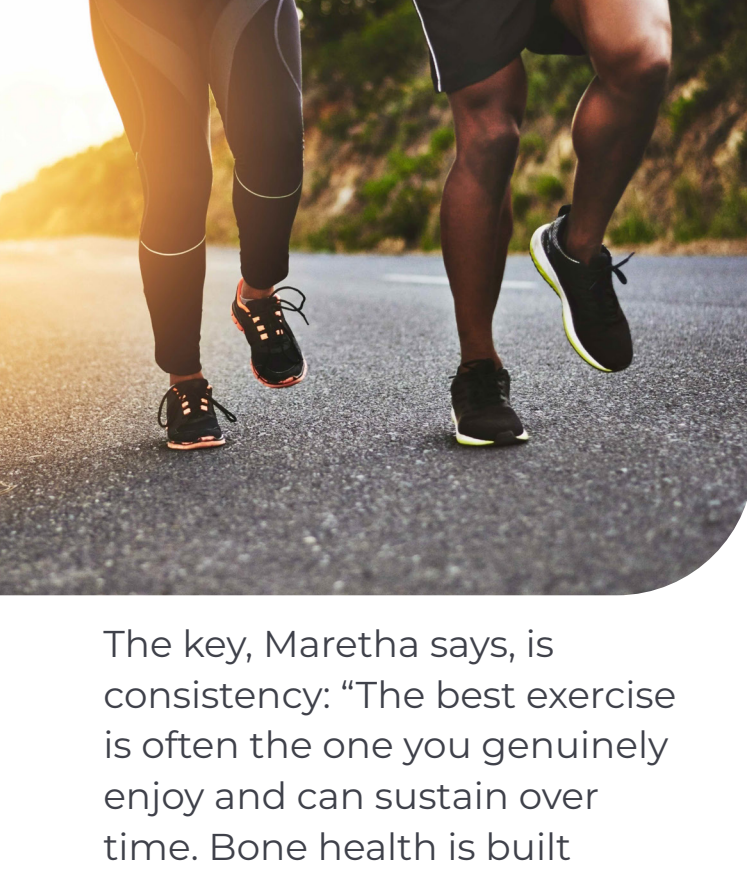
1 small tub yoghurt (200 ml)
= 300 mg calcium



±40 g cheese
= 300 mg calcium

Simple daily servings may include:

"Milk at breakfast, yoghurt or maas as a snack, or cheese added to lunch or dinner are realistic daily habits that can contribute meaningfully to long-term bone health," says Maretha. "If you don't typically have a variety of dairy foods at home, it is fine to get your dairy servings from only milk or amasi. And, if you do not meet the required 3 servings a day, even 1 cup of milk or amasi a day can make a difference."

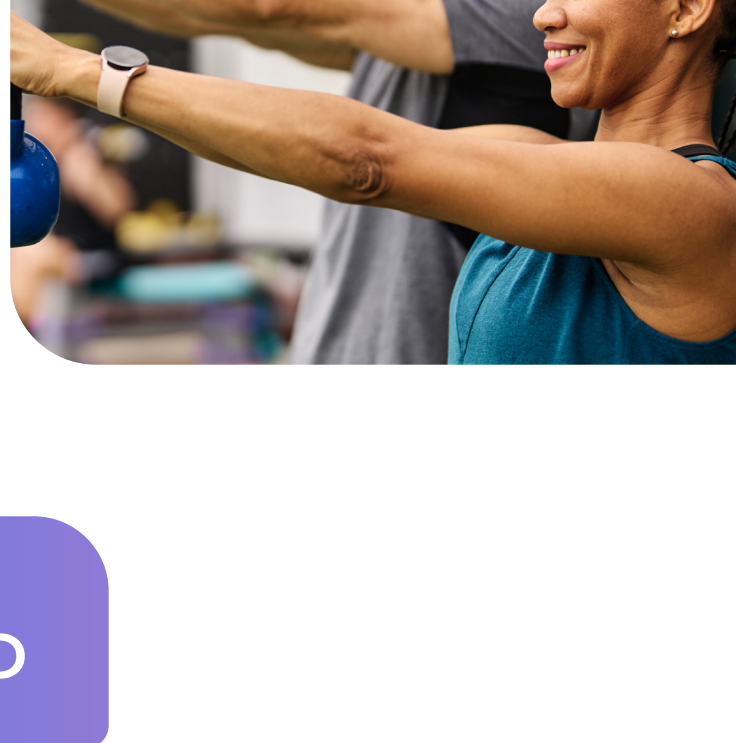


The key, Maretha says, is consistency: "The best exercise is often the one you genuinely enjoy and can sustain over time. Bone health is built through regular movement across your lifespan. Rediscover Dairy encourages adults, teens and children to prioritise regular movement, aiming for at least 30 to 40 minutes of weight-bearing activity four to five times per week."

Keeping bones active through weight-bearing exercise

Weight-bearing exercise helps stimulate bone development and maintenance. These activities encourage the body to keep strengthening the skeletal system.

While childhood and adolescence are especially important years for building bone mass, exercise remains essential throughout adulthood and older age. Weight-bearing exercise includes activities where the body works against gravity while staying upright - walking, hiking, running, dancing, skipping, stair climbing, participation in sports and strength training are all examples.



Getting safe sun exposure for vitamin D

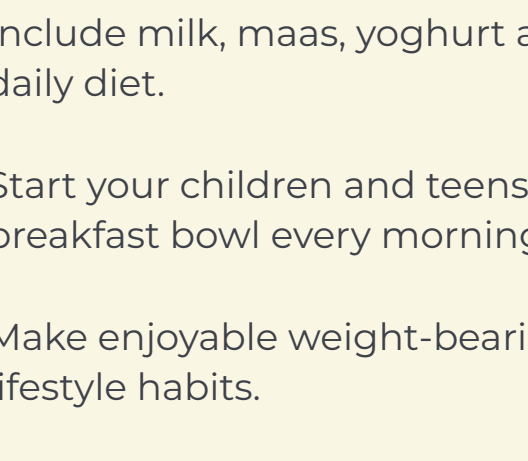
Vitamin D plays an essential role in bone health because it helps the body absorb and utilise calcium effectively. Without enough vitamin D, even a calcium-rich diet cannot work optimally.

Safe exposure to sunlight remains one of the most important ways the body naturally produces vitamin D. The amount of sun exposure needed differs between individuals, particularly across different skin tones, and care should always be taken to avoid sunburn and excessive UV exposure.

Maretha says, "Whether your concern is your child building strong bones, your own longevity or your ageing mum preserving bone density, you need to reach for everyday solutions that are most impactful, convenient, affordable and backed by science. Dairy fits easily into this because it is versatile, familiar, and enjoyed across generations. From a snack or part of a meal, these are small daily choices that add up over a lifetime. Bone health doesn't happen in a moment - it's built over years."



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Rediscover Dairy top tips for bone health

- ▶ Include milk, maas, yoghurt and cheese two to three times in your daily diet.
- ▶ Start your children and teens off with a dairy-based smoothie or breakfast bowl every morning.
- ▶ Make enjoyable weight-bearing activities part of your healthy lifestyle habits.
- ▶ Choose dairy-based options for post-workout recovery and snacks.
- ▶ Spend sun-safe time outdoors to support vitamin D levels.
- ▶ Focus on long-term healthy ageing, not just short-term health goals.
- ▶ Aim for consistency rather than perfection.

Remember that together, nutrition, exercise and moderate, safe sunlight exposure form a powerful long-term approach to supporting bone health and healthy ageing.



For more dairy ideas and recipes join the Rediscover Dairy Facebook page: www.facebook.com/RediscoverDAIRY

For find out more about dairy's role on healthy diets, visit www.rediscoverdairy.co.za