Adequate calcium

According to the Harvard School of Nutrition[i], there are some important reasons why milk may not be the best source of calcium such as the large number of people who are lactose intolerant, the high saturated fat content of many dairy products (since high saturated fat intake is a risk factor for heart disease), and high levels of galactose, a sugar released by the digestion of lactose in milk, have been studied as possibly damaging to the ovaries and leading to ovarian cancer. The Physician's committee for Responsible Medicine also lists research indicating Prostate cancer associated with milk or dairy product consumption.

In fact, in a 12-year Harvard study of 78,000 women, those who drank milk three times a day actually broke more bones than women who rarely drank milk. Similarly, a 1994 study of elderly men and women in Sydney, Australia, showed that higher dairy product consumption was associated with increased fracture risk. Those with the highest dairy product consumption had approximately double the risk of hip fracture compared to those with the lowest consumption.[ii]

As Dr. John McDougall in his book The McDougall Program points out "Where does a cow or an elephant get the calcium needed to grow its huge bones? From plants, of course. *Only plants*." He continues: "A consistent conclusion published in the scientific literature is clear: *Calcium deficiency of dietary origin is unknown in humans.*"[iii]

The most healthful calcium sources are green leafy vegetables and legumes, or "greens and beans" for short. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, collards, kale, mustard greens, Swiss chard, and other greens are loaded with highly absorbable calcium and a host of other healthful nutrients.

Beans - there is more than 100 milligrams of calcium in a plate of baked beans. Chickpeas, tofu, or other bean or bean products contain plenty of calcium as well. These foods also contain magnesium, which your body uses along with calcium to build bones.

Although many people think of calcium in the diet as good protection for their bones, this is not the whole story. You also need to keep calcium in your bones. Performing regular, weight-bearing exercise, minimizing salt intake and avoiding animal protein are also important.

Weight bearing exercises are key to building maximum bone density and strength. Active people tend to keep calcium in their bones, while sedentary people lose calcium.

Vitamin D also plays a role. It controls your body's use of calcium. About 15 minutes of sunlight on your skin each day normally produces all the vitamin D you need. If you get little or no sun exposure, you can get vitamin D from any multiple vitamin. The Recommended Dietary Allowance is 600 IU (5 micrograms) per day.

Avoiding excess salt is also important. Calcium in bones tends to dissolve into the bloodstream, then pass through the kidneys into the urine. Sodium can greatly increase calcium loss through the kidneys. If you reduce your sodium intake to one to two grams per day, you will hold onto calcium better.

Animal protein in fish, poultry, red meat, eggs, and dairy products—tends to leach calcium from the bones and encourages its passage into the urine. Plant protein—in beans, grains, and vegetables—does not appear to have this effect.[iv]

Other factors linked with calcium loss-smoking, use of steroid medications, such as prednisone, and alcohol (apparently by reducing the body's ability to make new bone to replace normal losses).

Finally, calcium isn't as bone-protective as we thought. Studies of calcium supplementation have shown no benefit in reducing fracture risk. Vitamin D appears to be much more important than calcium in preventing fractures.[v] Additionally, calcium may raise cancer risk. Research shows that higher intakes of both calcium and dairy products may increase a man's risk of prostate cancer by 30 to 50 percent.[vi] Plus, dairy consumption increases the body's level of insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) — a known cancer promoter.[vii]

Note: Blood tests for Calcium- The level of calcium in your blood does not reflect the amount of calcium you eat.[viii]

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[i] http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/calcium-full-story/index.html#calcium-from-milk

[ii] http://www.pcrm.org/health/diets/vegdiets/how-do-i-know-how-much-calcium-im-getting-from
See the following link for the risks re: Prostate cancer - http://www.pcrm.org/health/health-topics/calcium-and-strong-bones

[iii] John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 48.

[iv] See the pcrm.org site for more information or John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 48.

[v] http://drhyman.com/blog/conditions/dairy-6-reasons-you-should-avoid-it-at-all-costs/

[vi] http://drhyman.com/blog/conditions/dairy-6-reasons-you-should-avoid-it-at-all-costs/

[vii] http://drhyman.com/blog/conditions/dairy-6-reasons-you-should-avoid-it-at-all-costs/

[viii] John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 411.