



Do you think you are Australia's best bone-building canteen?

*Four out of five children are at risk of missing out on essential bone-building nutrients such as calcium**

The search is on to find '**Australia's Best Bone-Building Canteen**'. According to a recent national Roy Morgan study*, thousands of Australian children are missing out on important bone-building nutrients at school. With the increasing pressure on school canteens to provide young children with healthy eating options, Dairy Australia and Osteoporosis Australia have again teamed up to offer their support with this exciting competition to celebrate **National Healthy Bones Week this August 3 - 9**.

The primary school years are a key time for children to attain peak bone mass and the competition highlights the important role school canteens play in providing students with delicious meals packed with bone-building nutrients for strong, healthy bones.

If you think your canteen is the best at providing foods packed with bone-building nutrients, like dairy foods, encourage your students to vote and not only will you be awarded the coveted national title, you will earn \$2000 to put towards any improvements or equipment. The student who votes for the winner will also win a \$100 Rebel Sport voucher and fantastic state prizes are also up for grabs.

Thousands of entries were received during the 2007 competition, with student Kate Newton's winning nomination for St. Aloysius School in Kingston Beach, Tasmania, crowning her canteen 'Australia's best bone-building school canteen'.

Improving children's intake of calcium-rich foods, such as dairy foods, helps to support healthy bone development and maximize peak bone mass. This is important to help reduce the risk of osteoporosis and fractures in later adult years.

"Your daily calcium requirements change, depending on your age and gender" explains Judy Stenmark of Osteoporosis Australia. "By age 30, peak bone mass is reached and most of this is achieved by puberty when there is the greatest rate of bone growth. This is why it is so important for children to consume enough calcium rich foods, like dairy, whilst they are growing."

In the Guidelines for School Canteens and Other School Food Services (www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au), many schools already have a healthy canteen policy to support children making healthy food choices at school. Low-fat and reduced-fat dairy food choices including cheese, milk and yogurt are high on the priority of recommended foods which should be made available daily by school canteens. However, according to the study, children are missing out on important bone-building nutrients at school, with only one in five children eating cheese at lunchtime, just under seven per cent consuming milk and only a tiny six per cent are having yogurt.

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"The food that children have for lunch at school can have a serious impact on their health and nutrition," says Glenys Kerrins, Dietitian, Dairy Australia. "It is vital that schools provide children with foods packed with the nutrients essential for their growth and development.

*"Most children aged 6-13 need at least 3 serves** of calcium rich foods, such as dairy, per day to meet their calcium requirements; a glass of milk, a tub of yogurt or a slice of cheese," adds Glenys.*

It's time for canteens to lead the way:

It's important to make dairy foods an interesting proposition for all students and this is what the National Healthy Bones Week is hoping to encourage canteens and food service operators to do in 2008.

"Students will be more likely to vote for their school canteen during National Healthy Bones Week if the canteen creates some excitement around the event," adds Kerrins. "There will also be coverage in youth, parenting and lifestyle media to promote the event."

Whatever you do, don't forget to encourage the students to vote online at www.healthybones.com.au. Voting commences on 28/7/08 and closes on 30/8/08.

About the competition:

If you would like to be voted Australia's Best Bone-Building Canteen and earn \$2,000 to put towards any improvements or equipment that you need, your chance has arrived! Create a lunchtime party or whip up some interesting meals from recipes available on www.healthybones.com.au. The student who votes for the overall winner will receive a \$100 Rebel Sport voucher.

Runner up State favourite School Canteens will be awarded \$500 each and students with winning entries will each receive a Rebel Sport Voucher valued at \$50.

Winners will be selected on 12/9/08. See www.healthybones.com.au website for full terms and conditions.

Dairy foods – more than calcium:

Besides calcium, a serve of dairy** contains protein for growth and development, vitamin A for healthy eyesight and vitamin B12 to help keep blood healthy. Dairy foods also provide carbohydrate, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, riboflavin and zinc. So, with all these essential nutrients, dairy foods pack a powerful nutrient punch!

About National Healthy Bones Week:

Running from 3 – 9 August 2008, National Healthy Bones Week (NHBW) is an initiative of Dairy Australia and Osteoporosis Australia which has been successfully highlighting the important role of calcium in the development and maintenance of healthy bones (and the prevention of osteoporosis) for the past 14 years.

** Research: 'Dairy Usage & Attitude Study' conducted by Roy Morgan in 2007 across 5 major capital cities Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth*

*** One serve of dairy is equivalent to 250ml milk, a 200g tub of yogurt or 40g cheese.*

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