



Lifting the Lid on School Lunches

Kids missing out on lunchtime opportunity to build healthy bones

According to a recent national Roy Morgan study*, thousands of Australian children are missing out on important bone-building nutrients at school. In fact, at lunchtime, only one in five children are eating cheese, just under seven per cent are consuming milk and only six per cent are having yogurt.

The study also revealed that 84 per cent of children had consumed less than the recommended three or more serves of dairy a day, which means that **four out of five children are at risk of missing out on essential bone-building nutrients** such as calcium.

National Healthy Bones Week, August 3-9, 2008 a joint initiative by Dairy Australia and Osteoporosis Australia, highlights the need to protect bone health, particularly among growing children. 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 the teenage years, 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."

To address the issue, this year Dairy Australia and Osteoporosis Australia have teamed up to encourage both parents and the school community to 'Lift the Lid on Lunches' during **National Healthy Bones Week**.

"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 and parents work together to provide children with foods packed with the nutrients essential for their growth and development - whether they be from the school canteen or food brought from home."

Dairy Australia and Osteoporosis Australia are putting a call out to students to nominate '**Australia's best bone-building school canteen.**' This exciting initiative encourages students to consider the health benefits of the foods available for lunch from the school canteen and gain an understanding of calcium and other nutrients needed for growth and development of bones.

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"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. "Increasing children's intake of calcium-rich products, like dairy foods, will assist in supporting healthy bone development and can maximise peak bone mass."

Parents can set the example:

It's well known that children's behaviour reflect the habits of their parents. The Roy Morgan study showed parents who consumed more dairy foods had children who also consumed more dairy. When it comes to healthy bones, parents need to set a good example in what and how much they are eating.

Give them a nutritious lunch:

Put together some interesting snacks and meals for your kids to take to school too! There are many different recipes to choose from on www.healthybones.com.au

Dairy Foods – more than calcium:

Besides calcium, a serve of dairy** (such as a glass of milk or a tub of yogurt or two slices (40g) of cheese) also contains a number of additional nutrients important for bone health – including protein, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc. Dairy foods also provide other essential nutrients such as carbohydrate, potassium, and riboflavin. So 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.

About the competition:

If you believe your school canteen should be voted Australia's Best and win \$2,000, help your child to vote online at www.healthybones.com.au. Your child could also win a \$100 Rebel Sport voucher. Runner up State best school canteens will be awarded \$500 each and winning voters will each receive a \$50 Rebel Sport voucher.

Voting commences on 28/7/08 and closes on 30/8/08. Winners will be selected on 12/9/08. See www.healthybones.com.au website for full terms and conditions.

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'.

** Research: 'Dairy Usage & Attitude Study' conducted by Roy Morgan Research in May 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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