

CRUNCH BITES PODCAST

BITE SIZED CHILDREN'S NUTRITION INFO

Episode 9: Daily dairy: building strong bones and healthy teeth.

Mikala: Hello, and welcome to Crunch Bites, a podcast for parents where we discuss all things children's nutrition and inspire you to build those healthy habits in the home. Join us as we chat about picky eating, reaching for rainbow foods, packing school lunches that actually get eaten, and so much more. Brought to you by Crunch&Sip and presented by Qualified Nutritionists. This podcast is packed with goodness and full of fresh ideas.

Nicole: Hi, everyone, and welcome to today's mini-episode. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians and owners of the land, the Whadjuk people from the Noongar Nation, and recognise their continuing connection to the land, waters, and community. I'd also like to pay my respect to the elders, past, present, and future, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples living and working in this area.

Mikala: Thanks, Nic, and welcome, everyone. This episode is brought to you by green beans. Green beans are a great veggie. They have got heaps of protein, lots of fibre, and they come with a good dose of folate and potassium, too. They are one of those great veggies for pulling from the freezer and popping straight into your meal. They are often pre-processed, which means the stringy ends have been removed. Sometimes they're even sliced in half, and they just go perfectly from packet straight into your curry casserole for lovely pops of flavour and a bit of colour, too.

Nicole: That sounds delicious. So today we're chatting about dairy, what it is, how we can use it, and what some good alternatives are if you can't have dairy. So first off, what is dairy?

Mikala: Dairy is just essentially all foods that are derived from milk, and that includes your cheese and your yogurt. It also obviously includes other foods, such as your cream and your ice cream. But because ice cream does tend to be a more processed food and is usually higher in sugar, and cream, despite the nature of the way it's made, is a higher saturated fat and more concentrated sugar food as well. We do lean back towards your milk, yogurt and cheese when we are talking about and recommending ways for people to get their serves of dairy each day.

Nicole: And why is dairy considered an important food group? Dairy is basically essential for growth and development.

Mikala: It's a food group that's obviously really high in protein and comes with very important nutrients like your iodine, your vitamin A, your vitamin D, Zinc. But probably the most important reason is because of the naturally occurring high levels of calcium that come in dairy and the fact that obviously, we need that to grow strong bones.

Nicole: Yes, exactly, so which is really important when we think about kids, particularly as they're going through their growth

Supported by



Crunch&Sip®

stages. So, we do want to be making sure that they are having plenty of dairy. So, to make sure that kids are getting the full benefit of dairy, how many serves should they be aiming to get each day?

Mikala: We want our kids to be getting two to two and a half serves every day. And that's things like a cup of milk, which can also be reconstituted or long-life milk if you don't have access to fresh. Things like a couple of slices of cheese or around 40 grams of cheese cubes and then some of your white cheeses, so half a cup of ricotta or cottage cheese and then three-quarters a cup of yogurt or a cup of alternate milks like soy milk, rice milk or oat milk. And what we what we do suggest when reaching for dairy is where possible, grab those reduced-fat varieties.

Nicole: And how might this look across the day? How can we serve dairy in more creative ways?

Mikala: There's lots of ways to bring in the dairy and starting with obviously milk on your cereal or milk when you're making a porridge. Reaching for yogurt as a snack is a great one. Stirring through some nuts and seeds or even just some fresh fruit. Obviously, adding cheese to all your sandwiches or even stirring a bit of cottage or ricotta through a salad. Using yogurt in salad dressings is a great way to boost those serves across the day. And then using milk in smoothies that you whip up. You know, that's a really nice, simple way to get a good serve or two in across the day.

Nicole: Yeah. And so, you mentioned yogurt a few times. When it comes to yogurts, are they all made the same or is there a better choice?

Mikala: Yogurts are a bit of a minefield for parents these days, I think, because there's actually just so many to choose from and it's really hard to know which is the best to reach for. But it really does come back to stick with, stick with simple, stick with basic, and the low-fat natural varieties by far are the winners. Every time we go and have a good look at the labels, one thing to keep in mind whenever you're reaching for yogurt is just turn it over and have a look at the ingredients list and make sure that cream is not an added ingredient, if possible. It's ideal if it is a fermented food and when the cream is a separate and added ingredient that hasn't gone through that fermentation process.

Nicole: Yeah, that's a really good point. A lot of the times there is plenty of yogurts out there on the shelves that are more like desserts with their sugar and fat content. So, we know that some children can't have dairy. What are some of the reasons why this might be the case?

Mikala: Yeah, that's right. So, there's a there's quite a range of reasons that people can't tolerate dairy. It's quite an individual problem for, you know, for different people can be to do with an actual food allergy, such as not being able to tolerate the particular proteins that are found in milk. But most commonly, it's actually down to a lactose intolerance, which just simply means that people have trouble breaking down the natural sugars that that are found in dairy, which are called lactose. It affects around one in three people. And it's just because in our gut we stop making the lactase enzyme and that enzyme is essential to be able to digest lactose. So the good news is these days you can buy a lot of lactose-free products off the shelf, but you can also just go to the chemist and buy the lactase enzyme either as a chewable tablet that you eat after you've had some dairy or as a liquid that you can just add into milk so that it doesn't cause that same stomach problem.

Nicole: We have certainly come a long way in terms of support out there for people who with lactose intolerances, haven't we?

Mikala: We sure have.

Supported by



Nicole: So, what are some good alternatives to dairy if this is still a problem?

Mikala: So, also having come a long way is the alternative milks that you can find these days.

You know, if dairy milk or dairy milk products just aren't, don't agree, you can reach for quite a lot of options, you know, soy milk, rice milk, oat milk, almond milk, there's pretty much everything. And then those can be made to use to make yogurts and to some degree cheeses. So yeah, there's lots of options out there if dairy doesn't sit well. The important thing is that if you're choosing an alternative, you want to look for low or no-added sugar varieties, and you want to look for added calcium around about 100 milligrams per 100 mls, because, unlike dairy, calcium isn't naturally occurring to the same degree in those alternatives.

Nicole: And what about if milk in any form from any source is just something that kids are not loving?

Mikala: Yeah. So, if it's just not an option, then it's time to think about some alternatives that move away from dairy, but still give you that calcium benefit. So, a couple of options would be 100 grams of almonds with the skin on. They can be blitzed into a smoothie if need be using coconut water or coconut milk. And some water and some added fruit, sardines, 60 grams of sardines has a lovely good amount of calcium, as does half a cup of canned pink salmon with the bones included. Both of those can be blitzed up to make really yummy fish cakes if, by themselves, they're not as palatable. And then 100 grams of firm tofu, making sure obviously the tofu has added calcium, but that's a brilliant ingredient to slice and put into a burger or to dice up and toss through a curry. So, there are options. And, you know, one way or the other, it is important to make sure that kids are getting their calcium every day.

Nicole: Yeah, that's exactly right. And there are, like you said, quite a few alternative options out there available. So that brings us to the end of today's episode. We hope you enjoyed it. Don't forget to like, comment, and share. We'll catch you next time.

Supported by



Crunch&Sip®