OSTEOPOROSIS AND CHEESE

What is Osteoporosis?
As bones age they gradually lose strength and density. People suffering from osteoporosis find their bones become so porous and fragile that they are liable to break easily.

In the UK 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men over the age of 50 will be affected by this debilitating condition, with someone suffering from a fracture due to osteoporosis every three minutes. The annual cost to the NHS is £1.7 billion.

Statistics like this reveal the extent of the problem. However, although osteoporosis cannot be reversed, preventative steps can be taken through a bone-friendly diet and lifestyle.

How can cheese help?
Cheese can play an important part in a bone-friendly diet because it is one of the best sources of calcium and is easily absorbed. Calcium is the most prevalent mineral in our bones and is essential for giving strength and rigidity, so it is worth knowing that just 30g of British Cheddar (the size of a matchbox) provides 222mg of calcium.

How much calcium should we eat?
The amount of calcium we require depends on our age and sex. For children and young adults calcium is of vital importance in building strong, healthy bones and reducing bone deterioration in later life.

Eating some cheese each day, whether as a snack or as part of a meal, can significantly help you reach these suggested levels.

The ease of eating cheese
Cheese is an extremely versatile food and can be incorporated into your diet with ease. The British Cheese Board has compiled these Top Tips to show just how simple it can be:

- If suffering from those mid-morning hunger pangs opt for some cheese as a snack - it’s far more nourishing and better for your teeth than a sweet biscuit or crisps.
- Add grated cheese to your favourite savoury dishes - such as shepherd’s pie, casseroles or soup. Not only does it increase your calcium intake, it also adds a great taste to your meal.
- Few meals are as healthy and simple to make as salad. Try adding cheese to your favourite salads for a delicious new taste, e.g. Blue Stilton with bacon and rocket.
- Put slices of cheese on your toast instead of jam.
- Don’t forget that you can enjoy cheese by itself, with a savoury biscuit, or matched with a healthy portion of fruit or salad, e.g. grapes, celery and carrots.
- Complete a meal with a small chunk of cheese - with over 400 varieties of British cheese available, you can try a different cheese every day of the week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDED DAILY CALCIUM INTAKE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants 0-12 months (Breast-fed only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 4-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 7-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 11-18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 11-18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Committee of Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition notes that the additional increment may not be necessary with more recent evidence.
**Calcium Rich Recipes**

*Gloucester Ham and Vegetable Pasta Bake (Serves 4)*

Each serving of this delicious recipe contains 476mg of calcium, almost 70% of the recommended daily intake for adults.

- 25g (1oz) butter
- 175g (6oz) pasta shapes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 courgette, chopped
- 1 x 275g jar tomato pasta sauce
- 100g (4oz) cooked ham, cut into pieces
- 175g (6oz) Double Gloucester cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or oregano, plus a few sprigs to garnish
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 300g (10oz) natural Greek-style yoghurt

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Lightly grease a large baking dish or individual baking dishes with a teaspoon of the butter.

2. Cook the pasta shapes in plenty of boiling, lightly salted water until just tender, about 8 -10 minutes, or according to pack instructions.

3. At the same time, melt the butter in a large saucepan and sauté the onion, courgette and baby corn for 5 minutes.

4. Thoroughly drain the pasta and add to the vegetables. Stir in the tomatoes and the pasta sauce. Add the ham, then cut half the cheese into small cubes and stir through the pasta mixture with the chopped fresh herbs. Season to taste, then transfer to the prepared dish and level the top.

5. Beat the eggs and yoghurt together. Grate the remaining cheese and stir it into the egg mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Pour evenly over the pasta. Bake for 20-25 minutes until set and golden brown. Serve, garnished with fresh herb sprigs.

**Cook's tips:**

Try Red Leicester or mature Cheddar cheese instead of Double Gloucester. You could use low fat natural yoghurt instead of Greek-style if you want to keep the calories and fat to a minimum.

---

*Fruity Three-Cheese Salad (Serves 4)*

This salad is colourful, refreshing and very tasty - and it’s especially good for your teeth with the crunchy fruit and celery. Each serving contains 435mg of calcium, over 60% of the recommended daily intake for adults.

- 75g (3oz) mature Cheddar cheese
- 75g (3oz) Red Leicester cheese
- 75g (3oz) White Cheshire or Caerphilly cheese
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 6 celery sticks, sliced
- 2 red apples, cored and chopped
- 150g (5oz) red or green seedless grapes, halved
- 100g (4oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots
- 25g (1oz) raisins or sultanas
- 25g (1oz) almonds, chopped (or use toasted flaked almonds)
- A few crisp lettuce leaves, shredded
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds

1. Cut the three cheeses into bite-sized cubes.

2. Put the lemon juice into a large salad bowl and add the celery, apples, grapes, apricots, raisins or sultanas and almonds. Add the lettuce and cheese cubes and toss the ingredients together.

3. Put the sesame seeds into a small frying pan and heat, stirring them often, until they start to brown. Cool for a few moments, and then sprinkle over the salad. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

**Cook's tips:**

Use your choice of traditional British cheeses to make this recipe - you could try adding some Stilton, either the blue variety or white with apricots. If you prefer, just use one cheese - mature Cheddar always tastes good with apples and celery.

Another time, try adding a small pot of low-fat plain yoghurt to dress the salad - it tastes excellent, and adds even more calcium.

---

**For many more delicious cheesy recipes, please visit our website at www.britishcheese.com**

---

**British Cheese - Instant Goodness**

The British Cheese Board aims to increase consumption of cheese in the UK - particularly home produced cheese. It also promotes the health benefits of eating cheese.

**What are the benefits of eating cheese?**

- It is one of nature’s most complete foods
- It contains essential nutrients - protein, vitamins, calcium and other minerals
- It is a natural food source
- It is versatile

There are over 700 varieties of British cheese available with a British cheese for every occasion. The British Cheese Board was formed in 1997 and its members account for the majority of cheese produced in the UK.

For further information on the British Cheese Board please visit www.britishcheese.com or write to Dragon Court, 27 Macklin Street, London, WC2B 5LX

Published October 2004