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Dairy Free Diet Tips

The main concerns with a dairy free diet are calcium and calories. Calories are easily provided by eating a variety of healthy foods. Below is a table of the calcium requirement for children at different ages.

You can get ensure adequate daily calcium intake by providing:

1. Non-dairy milk alternatives, such as almond, coconut or soy milk (organic, non GMO made from whole soy beans) that are calcium enriched. They contain as much calcium per cup as cow's milk.
2. Nuts and seeds (one handful per day) – nut cheeses, coconut yoghurt for example are tasty dairy alternatives
3. Green leafy vegetables (at least 1 serving daily)
4. Legumes: beans, chickpeas, lentils (at least one serving daily)
5. Keep a food diary for 1-2 days and calculate how much calcium your child is getting per day. If needed you can add a supplement of calcium citrate or calcium chelate – these are available as powders, capsules, or tablets.

Recommended daily intake of calcium	Male	Female
Birth to 6 months:	210mg	210mg
7–12 months:	270mg	270mg
1–3 years:	500mg	500mg
4–8 years:	700mg	700mg
9–11 years:	1000mg	1000mg
12–13 years:	1300mg	1300mg
14–18 years:	1300mg	1300mg

Dairy foods contain a lot of calcium, but given the high number of people who have problems with dairy, such as lactose intolerance and allergies, there are healthier options for them. Here is a list of easily absorbed calcium sources:

- Beans: 370mg in 1 cup of black eyed peas; 191mg white beans
- Dark leafy greens: 95 mg in 1 cup of kale; 74 mg bok choy
- Seaweed: 126 mg in 1 cup
- Sesame seeds: 88mg in 1 tablespoon
- Almonds: 72mg in ¼ cup (20 nuts)

From Children's Health A-Z by Dr Leila Masson, Bateman. Available on fishpond.com.au