Consuming dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt every day is a healthy way to nourish brains, bones and bodies

Fueling Brain Development

A baby's **brain doubles in size** by 12 months and reaches about 80% of adult size by 36 months. Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt provide up to **7 of the 14 nutrients important for early brain development**, including:

✓ Protein ✓ Zinc ✓ Selenium ✓ Iodine ✓ Choline* ✓ Vitamin B12 ✓ Vitamin A

Supporting Gut & Immune Health

Did you know most of the body's immune system is in the gut? Fermented dairy foods like yogurt and kefir can help **maintain gut health**, which can help nourish **the immune system too**.

Maximizing Healthy Growth & Performance

Dairy as part of a well-balanced diet can help **maximize children's growth potential**. Plus, the high-quality protein in milk, cheese and yogurt can help kids **feel fuller longer** and **provide lasting energy**.

Building Strength for a Lifetime

Dairy foods provide **more bone-building nutrients per calorie than any other food group**. Building your child's "bone bank" is like saving for their education. Investing in good nutrition now will pay off with stronger bones in the future.

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*One serving of milk provides 8% of the Daily Value for choline.

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From Sip to Spoonful:
Dairy Foods in Everyday Healthy Eating

How many dairy servings per day?

6-12 mo	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-12 yrs	12-18 yrs
Up to 1 ⅔ servings	1¾–2½ servings	2–2½ servings	2½–3 servings	3 servings

What counts as a serving of dairy?*

Cottage Cheese
1/2 cup

Hard Cheese
1 ounce

Kefir
1 cup

Milk/Lactose-Free Milk
1 cup

Yogurt
3/4 cup

Shredded Cheese
1/4 cup

Building Healthy Meals and Snacks with Dairy Foods

For younger children:

Serve plain, unsweetened yogurt with pureed fruits

Add cottage cheese to unsweetened apple sauce, veggies or cooked pasta

Top cooked veggies with melted cheese

For school-age children & teens:

Blend milk into smoothies with fruits and vegetables

Layer yogurt with fruit and nuts or whole grain cereal for a balanced breakfast or snack

Make quesadillas with shredded cheese, veggies and whole-grain tortillas

*Serving sizes are based on the Daily Servings by Calorie Level supplement to the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed as defined by the Food and Drug Administration.

TIP! Health experts recommend milk and water as the go-to drinks for 1-18 year-olds. Milk for nutrition and water for hydration.