

# Empower Your Teen to be Healthy



It's hard enough to communicate to teens let alone talk to them about their health and what their actions today will mean when they are fifty! If children do not deposit enough calcium into their bones early in life, the window of opportunity never presents itself again. However, there are little things parents and other significant adults can do to encourage teenagers to make the right choices.

- **Be a role model.** Research shows that moms who drink milk have daughters who drink milk too.
- **Talk to them about their needs.** Teens that are aware of their body's need for calcium are more likely to be conscious of calcium and consume more of this essential nutrient.
- **Eat with them.** They will make healthier choices if you are making them too.
- **Eat at home.** They will eat more of the "good for you" foods when you prepare them.
- **Be active with them.** Have fun doing activities the family can enjoy or encourage teens to be active with their friends and at school. Participate in bone building exercise like hiking, tag football and frisbee.
- **Talk to them about their choices.** It's a fact of life that teens eat out and Alberta teens are eating in fast food restaurants 2-4 times a week. So talk to them about their choices when they are out. Mention having milk with their meal instead of pop and a baked potato or salad instead of fries.
- **Keep healthy foods available at home.** Make sure the fridge and cupboards are stocked with foods from the four food groups that your teens can easily snack on. Include lots of whole grains, ready to eat fruits and vegetables, milk products like cheese, flavoured milks and yogurt, and meat and alternatives for quick and easy snacks.
- **Encourage and support healthy school policies.** Parents can play a role by becoming involved in the school to facilitate a healthier environment for their children.

*A recent Alberta survey showed Alberta youth, especially girls, aren't meeting their needs for calcium, iron and other important nutrients.*

## Need more information on milk and other dairy products?

Contact a registered nutritionist at Alberta Milk, toll-free 1-800-252-7530 or in Edmonton area 453-5942.

[www.albertamilk.com](http://www.albertamilk.com)