



How Much “D” Do You Need?

In order to keep bones and your immune system strong and to stay healthy, doctors have recently doubled the recommended amount of Vitamin D for kids. So, what does that mean for your child? Maybe it’s 10 to 15 minutes per day in the sun to trigger vitamin D production in the skin. If you’re not getting “D” outside, some doctors might even recommend you drink several cups of milk every day to get enough or take a Vitamin D supplement.

Children and teens should consume milk and cereal that has been boosted with Vitamin D. How can you tell? Check the label to see if a food is ‘fortified’ with Vitamin D. Other good sources of this vitamin include tuna and shrimp.

Does your child need more “D”? Talk to your Pediatrician to see how much Vitamin D your child needs.

For more information, contact Ochsner Medical Center for Children at 504-842-3900, Ochsner Children’s Health Center in Metairie at 504-887-1133 or in Destrehan at 985-764-6036.

FIBER 101

Fiber is not just for adults and the elderly; children can also benefit from eating foods that are high in fiber. Foods that are high in fiber help prevent constipation, lower cholesterol, maintain weight, and aid in quickly moving foods through the digestive system.

Foods labeled as “high-fiber” must contain at least five grams of fiber per serving. In order to calculate how much fiber your child needs, add five to their age and you’ll know how much they need. For example, if your child is 10, he/she should consume at least 15 grams of fiber a day. Kids should drink six to eight glasses of water daily.

High Fiber Foods for Your Family:

- “Whole” grain breads, muffins, bagels, and whole wheat pastas
- Add dry fruit, like cranberries or raisins to muffins
- Mix in berries (blueberries, raspberries, or strawberries) to cereal or oatmeal
- Dip celery in peanut butter and top with raisins

The Caffeine Craze



Caffeine is a stimulant that is naturally produced in the leaves and seeds of some plants. It “stimulates” the central nervous system, causing you to feel more alert and energized. But, too much caffeine in children can cause nervousness, upset stomach, headaches, and increased heart rate.

Below are five reasons to monitor your child’s caffeine and soft drink consumption:

- 1 One 12oz. sugar-filled soft drink a day can increase your child’s risk of obesity by 60%.
- 2 Children who drink soft drinks are less likely to consume the liquids they actually need, like milk. And, the calcium in milk helps build strong bones and teeth.
- 3 Caffeine is a diuretic that may lead to dehydration.
- 4 Caffeinated and high-sugar drinks can weaken tooth enamel, causing cavities.
- 5 A small amount of caffeine can stay in the body for six hours, leading to sleeping problems.

“Step up” Healthy Eating



The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designed a new food guide, called MyPyramid.gov to help children and adults find a balance between food and physical activity.

Here’s what it recommends for each day:

- **Orange = Grains-** 6 oz. of “Whole” grain bread, rice, or pasta everyday.
- **Green = Vegetables-** 2.5 cups of a variety of dark vegetables that include: cooked, fresh, raw, canned or dried.
- **Red = Fruits-** 2 cups of different fruits, such as, berries, melons, and mixed fruit. Go easy on fruit juices.
- **Yellow = Oils-** Try to stick to foods naturally high in oil, like nuts, fish, and avocados. Avoid shortenings, butter, and margarine.
- **Blue = Dairy-** Children need three cups of low-fat or fat-free dairy products a day, such as milk, cheese, or yogurt.
- **Purple = Meat & Beans-** 5.5 oz of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, and eggs. Meat and poultry cuts should be lean or low-fat.
- **Physical Activity-** Children and teenagers need 60 minutes of physical activity, 5-6 days a week, so let’s get moving!