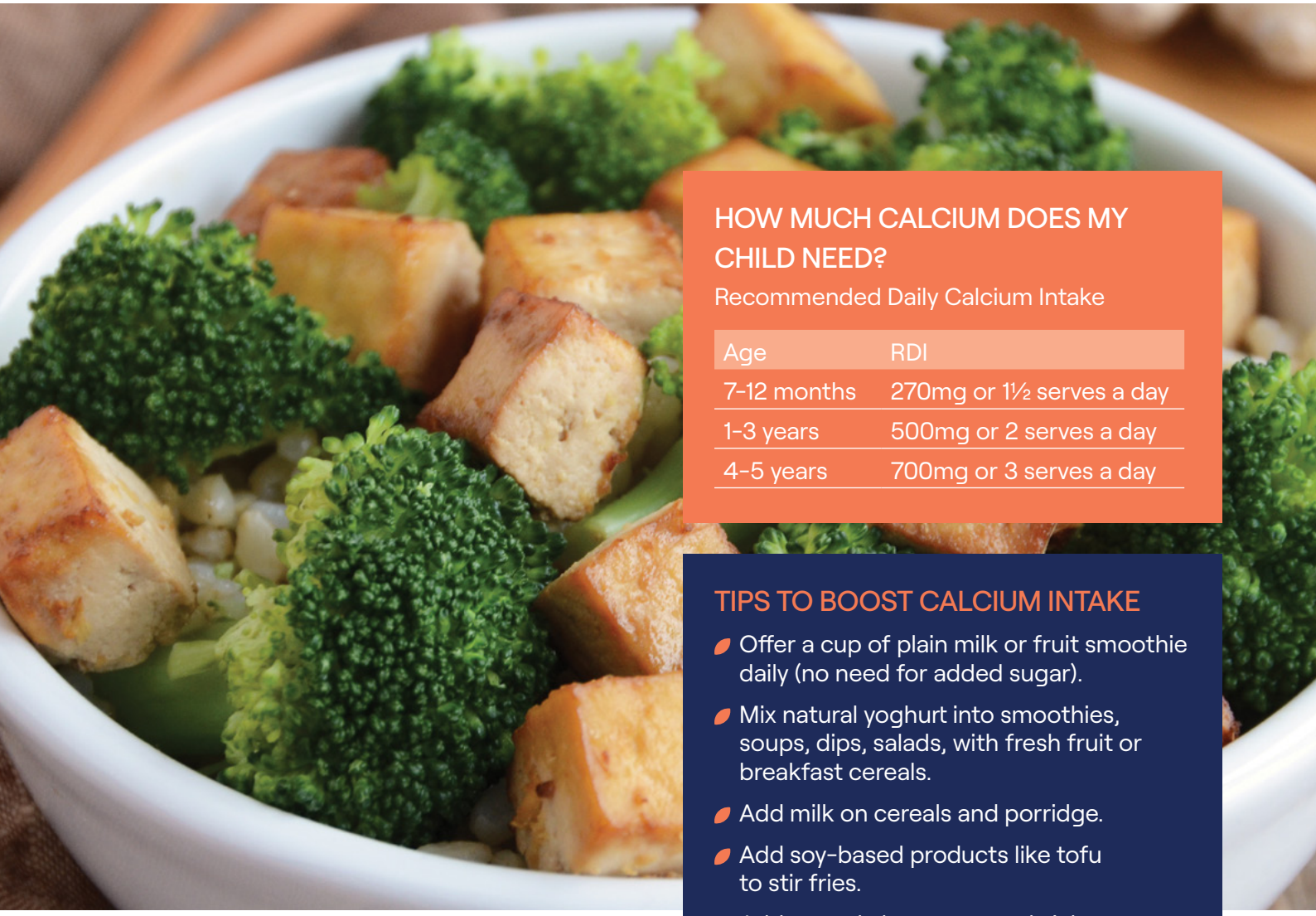
# Calcium for children

Calcium is needed for building strong bones and teeth during childhood. The heart, muscles and nerves also need calcium to work properly.



## HOW MUCH CALCIUM DOES MY CHILD NEED?

Recommended Daily Calcium Intake

| Age | RDI |
|---|---|
| 7-12 months | 270mg or 1½ serves a day |
| 1-3 years | 500mg or 2 serves a day |
| 4-5 years | 700mg or 3 serves a day |

## TIPS TO BOOST CALCIUM INTAKE

- Offer a cup of plain milk or fruit smoothie daily (no need for added sugar).
- Mix natural yoghurt into smoothies, soups, dips, salads, with fresh fruit or breakfast cereals.
- Add milk on cereals and porridge.
- Add soy-based products like tofu to stir fries.
- Add grated cheese to sandwiches.

## EXAMPLES OF 1 SERVE DAIRY

1 SERVE DAIRY =



250mls of milk (or calcium fortified milk alternative),



2 slices of cheese,



¾ cup (220g) natural yoghurt or ½ cup ricotta cheese.



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## GOOD SOURCES OF CALCIUM

| ANIMAL BASED CALCIUM SOURCES | | |
|---|---|---|
| Source | Amount | Calcium level |
| Milk (regular) | 1 cup 250ml | 250mg |
| Hard yellow cheese | 2 slices | 250mg |
| Canned salmon, bones well crushed | ½ cup (100g) | 250mg |
| Sardines, canned | 60g | 250mg |
| Yoghurt (plain, low fat) | 110g (1 tub) | (174mg) |

| PLANT BASED CALCIUM SOURCES | | |
|---|---|---|
| Source | Amount | Calcium level |
| Tofu (firmed with Calcium Salts) | 170g | 544mg |
| Soy milk (fortified calcium) | 250ml | 250mg |
| Tahini, unhulled | 1 Tbs (20g) | 116-165mg |
| Cabbage or bok choy (cooked) | 1 cup | 130mg |
| Chickpeas (cooked) | 1 cup | 80mg |
| Broccoli (boiled) | 1 cup | 35mg |

Reference: AUSNUT – Australian Food and Nutrient Database, FSANZ 2011-2013, USDA Food Database, 2009and Australian Food Composition Database 2019.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Breastfeed, if possible, for up to 2 years and beyond.
- If breastmilk is not available, use infant formula as the main drink until 12 months of age
- By 12 months, it's time to say goodbye to bottles. Offer milk and water in a cup.
- Children under 2 years, should have full fat milk and dairy products.
- Toddler formulas/milks are not needed unless recommended by a health professional.

## COW'S MILK ALTERNATIVES

- Soy milk, fortified with calcium, is the best alternative because it is high in protein and added calcium.
- Other milk alternatives can be used after 12 months if it is full fat and calcium fortified.

## LINK TO OTHER SOURCES AND INFORMATION

- Calcium and Vegan Diets (dietitiansaustralia.org.au)
- www.karitane.com.au
- www.healthybeginnings.net.au



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