

# *The Nation* 1976 Aug. Lack of milk linked to increased fracture rates in children *children* ✓

ROSEMONT - A new study recently found that children who avoided drinking safe and healthy milk were more likely to experience fractures and be overweight than a comparison group of more than 1,000 similarly aged children. The study is the first to link milk avoidance to increased fracture rates.

"Children who regularly avoided milk had lower bone mineral density and weighed more, two factors that increase fracture risk," said lead researcher Ailsa Goulding, Ph.D., FACN, professor, University of Otago, New Zealand. "Children and adolescents need 3-4 servings of dairy foods each day to help prevent broken bones now and chronic conditions like osteoporosis as adults."

The study compared the fracture histories of 50 children who avoided drinking milk for extended periods of time to a group of 1,000 children from the same city, Dunedin, New Zealand.

The children who avoided milk did not eat calcium-rich food substitutes or supplements. Nearly one in three of the young milk-

avoiders had broken a bone before they were eight years old, frequently from slight trauma such as a minor trip or fall. A recent report documented a significant increase in the number of forearm fractures in adolescent boys and girls over the last 30 years [2].

"Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt are packed with nine essential nutrients that are necessary for strong bones, healthy teeth and better bodies," said Connie Diekman, R.D., director, University Nutrition, Washington University, St. Louis. "With the wide variety of dairy foods available, from low fat flavoured milks to yogurt snacks and string cheese, parents and kids can choose from a number of convenient options for every taste and budget."

Dairy foods provide three quarters of the calcium in the diets of children and adolescents. The daily recommended intake (DRI) for calcium in adolescents aged 9-18 years is 1,300 mg - the equivalent of four servings of milk, cheese or yogurt. For children ages 4-8, the DRI for calcium is 800 mg or three servings every day.