

Dairy Products Help Maintain Children's Weight

Calcium's role in building strong and healthy bones is well-known, and new research indicates consumption of calcium-rich foods like dairy products may be related to lower body fat among children.

The study was published in the December issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. The researchers examined eating habits of children ages 2 to 8 and their mothers, finding that kids who consumed lower amounts of calcium had overall higher body fat than children with high calcium intake.

The researchers also note that children's dietary preferences – which generally follow us into adulthood – are established very early: often by age 5. This study offers more evidence that children should be strongly encouraged to regularly include calcium-rich foods and beverages in their diets. As always, kids' best role models for good nutrition and physical activity are their parents.