

# The Power Of Dairy For Dental Health

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ST. LOUIS - National Children's Dental Health Month brings together dental health professionals, caregivers, parents, and teachers to give children the best start on oral health. That start involves everything from brushing and flossing to healthy snacks and routine dental visits. For St. Louis District Dairy Council, this month is an opportune time to share yet another reason dairy is such an important part of a healthy diet.

The need for dairy starts early in life. Not only are milk and dairy foods delicious, but they offer many nutrients critical to overall health, including calcium. This unique mineral supports vital metabolic processes. Ninety-nine percent of the body's calcium is stored in bones and teeth; so getting enough of it throughout life is essential.

“The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults consume 3 servings of dairy every day to ensure they are meeting their calcium needs.” States Kelsey Bentlage, Nutrition Educator.

Many Americans have heard that milk and dairy are good for teeth, but may not know why. Dairy foods such as cheese, milk, and yogurt provide a plethora of benefits linked to overall health and a winning smile.

**Calcium.** This mineral is known for its role in bone health. In the same way bones absorb calcium, so does tooth enamel, which in turn strengthens teeth against decay.

**Phosphorus.** Phosphorus, another mineral found in dairy, works in concert with calcium to strengthen enamel that surrounds teeth.

**Vitamin D.** This nutrient allows enamel to absorb calcium and protect teeth. A vitamin D deficiency increases susceptibility to tooth decay and gum disease.

**Casein.** This dairy protein can help form a protective film over teeth and reduce the risk of tooth decay.

**pH.** Dairy foods are mainly pH-neutral and may help neutralize acidic or sugary food and drinks. Consuming dairy after snacks or meals may be beneficial.

**Saliva.** Dairy stimulates the production of saliva, which helps maintain oral and dental health.

While dairy plays a role in keeping teeth healthy, other daily habits are important too. Brushing teeth for two minutes twice with a soft-bristled toothbrush and flossing are vital to a health teeth routine.

Looking for easy ways to include more dairy for a winning smile? “The dairy category makes it easy, as there is a dairy food for everyone and every time of the day. Whip up a smoothie, melt cheese on cooked vegetables, or mix yogurt with granola and fresh fruit,” notes Bentlage. For additional ways to incorporate dairy into daily food choices, email [kbentlage@stldairycouncil.org](mailto:kbentlage@stldairycouncil.org), call (314) 835-9668, or visit [www.stldairycouncil.org](http://www.stldairycouncil.org)



## **Easy Cheese Veggie Dip Recipe**

We all know cheese for it's squeaky quality but did you know that cheese's squeak also helps keep your mouth squeaky clean? Here is a cheesy recipe to keep on hand for an easy, healthy, and dairylicious recipe to keep on hand for any upcoming gatherings. Enjoy!

Total Time 5 minutes

Servings 24

### **Ingredients**

- 2 cups sour cream (or greek yogurt if interested in a low calorie alternative)
- 2 cups [mayonnaise](#)
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder

- 2 tablespoons onion flakes
- 1 teaspoon southwest spice mix
- 2 tablespoons parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon [white granulated sugar](#)
- 8 ounces mozzarella shredded

## **Instructions**

1. Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, parsley, garlic powder, onion flakes, seasoning, parmesan cheese and sugar.
2. Fold in mozzarella cheese.
3. Refrigerate 2+ hours.
4. Serve with vegetables and or crackers.

## **Serving Suggestions**

- red peppers, snap peas, bell peppers, cauliflower, carrots, celery, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, or crackers