

Calcium Sources in Food

Food Item	Serving Size	Calcium Content (mg)
Milk		
Whole	8 oz.	291
Skim	8oz.	302
Soy	8 oz.	300
Yogurt*		
Plain, low-fat	8 oz.	250-400
Fruit, low-fat	8 oz.	250-400
Frozen, fruit	8 oz.	240
Frozen, chocolate	8 oz.	160
* Yogurt varies in serving size, fat and calcium content. Check labels for calcium and caloric content		
Cheese		
Mozzarella	1 oz.	207
Muenster	1 oz.	203
Cheddar	1 oz.	204
Ricotta	4 oz.	335
Cottage	4 oz.	78
Ice Cream (Vanilla, 11% fat)		
Hard	1 cup	176
Soft Serve	1 cup	236
Fish and Shellfish		
Sardines (canned in oil with bones)	3 oz.	375
Salmon, pink (canned with bones)	3 oz.	167
Shrimp (canned)	3 oz.	100
Vegetables		
Bok choy (raw)	1 cup	250
Broccoli		
Fresh	1 cup	136
Frozen	1 cup	100
Soybeans	1 cup	175
Collard greens	1 cup	150
Turnip greens	1 cup	200
Carrots	1 cup	50
Tofu	4 oz.	150
The calcium content of tofu processed with calcium salts can provide as much as 300 mg per 4 oz. serving. Check food label for specific information.		
Calcium Fortified Foods		
Milk	8 oz.	500
Fruit Juice	8 oz.	300
Cereal (without milk)	¾ cup	250

Source: National Osteoporosis Foundation, 2010

Estimation of Daily Calcium Intake

To calculate your daily calcium intake, please complete the following chart:

Source of Calcium	mg
Dairy-free diet	300
Dairy Products (300 mg per serving)	_____
Calcium-fortified foods	_____
Calcium Supplements	_____
Total Calcium Intake	_____

Adopted with permission from Oregon Osteoporosis Center

Summary

The combination of calcium and vitamin D plus taking prescription medications to treat osteoporosis is more beneficial to bone health than just taking medications alone.

In the case of calcium and vitamin D, more is not necessarily better. While adequate intake is needed, it is also important not to get too much. Do not take more than 2000 mg of calcium (diet plus supplement) or 800 IU of vitamin D per day, unless directed to do so by a health care professional. If you are at risk for or have already been diagnosed with osteoporosis your healthcare professional can help you determine which treatments are right for you.

Brochure Developed by the Endocrine Nurses Society



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Calcium & Vitamin D

Building Blocks of Strong Bones



The Importance of Calcium and Vitamin D

Bone is made up of calcium and protein. The skeleton is continually being renewed, a process where old bone is removed and new bone is formed. This renewal process requires an adequate calcium intake to maintain bone health over a lifetime. Individual needs for calcium change as we age. The demand for calcium is greatest during childhood and adolescence when growth is occurring and bone formation is occurring at a faster rate. Some bone loss in adulthood is normal, but excessive loss, especially in postmenopausal women and older men, can lead to bone fragility and fractures. Getting enough calcium helps protect bones by slowing the rate of bone loss. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. Older adults may not get enough vitamin D to maximize calcium absorption, since this process tends to become less efficient with aging. Adequate calcium and Vitamin D are necessary for bone health at any age, but may not be enough to prevent bone loss in some people.



Calcium: Requirements & Sources

Recommended Calcium Intake (mg/day)

<i>Children, age 9-17 years</i>	<i>1300 mg</i>
<i>Adults, 18 years and older</i>	<i>1000-1500 mg</i>

A diet low in calcium-rich foods provides an about 300 mg of calcium per day. If you have difficulty getting your daily calcium from dietary sources, calcium supplements can make up the difference. To improve absorption, divide the calcium supplements into equal doses of no more than 500 mg taken with meals.

Calcium supplements are widely available in a variety of forms including chewable tablets and liquid preparations. The most common types are calcium carbonate and calcium citrate. Each have advantages and limitations. Calcium carbonate is usually inexpensive and contains the highest amount of elemental calcium (the actual amount of calcium provided in a supplement). Calcium citrate is a good alternative. It is easily absorbed, can be taken with or without food and is less likely to cause constipation or intestinal upset. Calcium citrate is usually more expensive and requires that you take more tablets per day to get an adequate amount of elemental calcium.

If you take a calcium supplement, be sure to drink six to eight glasses of water each day.

If you have a history of kidney stones, consult your healthcare provider before increasing your calcium intake.

Vitamin D: Requirements and Sources

Vitamin D is needed for your body to absorb calcium from the foods you eat. The National Osteoporosis Foundation states adults under age 50 need 400-800 international units (IU) of Vitamin D daily, and adults age 50 and older need 800-1,000 IU daily. Vitamin D can be found in fortified milk, egg yolks, saltwater fish, and liver. Getting at least 15 minutes a day of sun exposure will help your body obtain vitamin D through the skin. During winter months when sun exposure is decreased or if you wear sunscreen or protective clothing, your body is not able to process the Vitamin D from sunlight. It has also been found that as we age, our skin becomes less efficient at processing Vitamin D.

Vitamin D supplements are available. Most multivitamins contain 200-400 IU of vitamin D. Many calcium supplements have Vitamin D added. In addition, vitamin D is also available in tablet form. Vitamin D and calcium supplements do not have to be taken at the same time to be effective.

Reading supplement labels can be confusing. Here are some guidelines to help:

- Look for the % daily value or RDA (recommended daily allowance). Whatever this percentage is, add a "0" to determine how much elemental calcium is in each serving. For example, if the nutrition facts on the label indicate 50% RDA, this specifies that each serving contains 500 mg of calcium.
- Serving sizes can vary; it may take two or more tablets (or chews) to make a serving. Check the supplement label for serving size details to calculate how many tablets (or chews) you will need to take each day.