



Calcium: Keep Your Bones Healthy!

Why Is Calcium Important?

Our bodies use calcium to maintain strong bones and teeth. Nearly half of all bone forms during the teen years, but by early adulthood, our bones stop accepting more calcium. Maximizing calcium intake in childhood is critical for the development of maximum bone mass and reducing the risk of osteoporosis in the future. Studies indicate that many children and teens are not getting enough calcium in their diets. Weight-bearing exercise helps our bones stay strong and dense.

How Much Calcium Do We Need?

Daily Calcium Requirements	
Age	Calcium (mg/day)
0-6 months	200 mg
6 months - 1 year	260 mg
1-3 years	700 mg
4-8 years	1000 mg
9-18 years	1300 mg
18-50 years	1000 mg
Women > 50 years	1200 mg
Men > 70 years	

How Do We Get Calcium?

The best source of calcium is from foods; children who are not getting enough calcium in their diet may also take a calcium supplement as guided by your pediatrician. Vitamin D supports the body's ability to absorb calcium. Babies <12 months old need 400 IU/day vitamin D, while anyone over 12 months old needs 600 IU/day vitamin D.

Amount of Calcium in Common Foods (Approximate)			
Food (serving)		Calcium (mg)	Comments
Dairy	Cow's milk (1 cup)	300 mg	Alternative milks like pea plant, hemp, goat, almond, soy, rice and coconut vary by brands – see individual labelling.
	Milk alternative (1 cup)	10-450 mg	
	Yogurt (6 oz)	300 mg	
	Cheese (1 oz)	140-220 mg	
Vegetables	Leafy greens, cooked (1 cup)*	100-260 mg	*Dark green vegetables contain oxalates, which makes the calcium less bioavailable to the body. As little as 10% of the calcium in these foods is absorbed.
	Kelp (1 cup)	135 mg	
	Okra, cooked (1 cup)	80 mg	
	Sweet potato, mashed (1/2 cup)	44 mg	
	Broccoli, cooked or raw (1 cup)	35-70 mg	
Fruits	Orange juice, calcium fortified (1 cup)	300 mg	
	Figs, dried, uncooked (1 cup)	240 mg	
	Kiwi, raw (1 cup)	60 mg	
	Orange (1 medium)	50 mg	
Legumes	Tofu processed with calcium (4 oz)	400 mg	
	Soybeans, boiled (1/2 cup)	100 mg	
	White beans, cooked (1/2 cup)	100 mg	
Grains	Bread, calcium fortified (1 slice)	150-200 mg	Many breads and cereals are fortified with calcium.
	Oatmeal, cooked (1 cup)	180 mg	
	Tortillas, corn (2 tortillas)	40 mg	
Nuts and Seeds	Almonds (1 oz)	80 mg	Almonds contain oxalates, similar to leafy greens (see above).
	Sesame seeds (1 tablespoon)	80 mg	
	Sunflower seeds (1 oz)	20 mg	
	Pumpkin seeds (1 oz)	15 mg	
Fish	Sardines, mackerel, salmon – canned with bones (3 oz)	170-370 mg	