

## Building and Keeping Strong Bones: Reaching Your Calcium Goal

### How much calcium is right for me?

Everyone needs calcium—women, men, kids and teens—but our calcium needs change throughout life. Look at the table below and see what you need now.

Group	Elemental Calcium Needed per day in milligrams ( mg )
Children 1-3 years	700 mg
Children/young adults 4-8 years	1000 mg
Children/young adults 9-18 years	1300 mg
Adults 19-50 years	1000 mg
Women and Men 50+ years	1200 mg

**My daily goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

### How can I reach my daily calcium goal?

By eating enough high calcium foods, calcium fortified food and beverages, taking calcium supplements or a combination of all three!

Dairy Products		
Item	Serving	Calcium (in milligrams) *
Yogurt, lowfat plain	1 cup	415
Yogurt, lowfat with fruit	1 cup	372
Milk, nonfat, 1%, 2%, or whole	1 cup	300
Cheese, Swiss	1 oz	272
Cheese, mozzarella, part skim	1 oz	207
Frozen yogurt	1/2 cup	150

Vegetables & Legumes		
Item	Serving	Calcium (in milligrams) *
Tofu w/ calcium	1/2 cup	120 to 350
Turnip greens, cooked	1/2 cup	134
Kale, cooked	1/2 cup	103
Navy beans, cooked	1/2 cup	62
Mustard greens, cooked	1/2 cup	52
Broccoli, cooked	1/2 cup	47

Other Foods		
Item	Serving	Calcium (in milligrams) *
Oysters	1/2 cup	100
Canned pink salmon w/ bones	3 oz	150
Canned sardines	8 medium	350

\*The above levels are approximate amounts.

Learn to read labels. The amount of calcium in foods is referred to in terms of % of the RDA (recommended daily allowance) and is based on a 1000 mg per day requirement. So 1% of the RDA equals 10 mg of elemental calcium. For example, 30% of the RDA equals 300 mg of calcium. Just add a zero to the percent on the label!

Fortified Foods/Drinks: Some orange juice, soy and rice milk is supplemented with calcium and may contain as much calcium as a glass of milk.

## Should I take calcium supplements?

If you have a hard time eating enough high calcium foods, supplements are a great way to get the calcium you need. It comes in a number of forms (calcium carbonate, calcium citrate, etc.) The elemental calcium content is what is important. Read the label to find the amount of elemental calcium in each pill. Here are some examples, but there are many more.

Examples of Calcium Tablets		
Drug	Elemental Calcium/Tablet ( mg )	Cost*
<i>Calcium carbonate</i>		
Calcium 600	600	6.03
Os-Cal 500	500	7.11
Tums 500	500	3.97
<i>Calcium Citrate</i>		
Citracal	200	10.31
<i>Calcium phosphate</i>		
Posture-D	600	7.97

## How should I take my calcium supplements?

- Calcium is best absorbed if taken in small amounts throughout the day. Divide the daily dose into smaller amounts if the total daily dose is 500 mg or more per day.
- Use of manufactured supplements is best. Calcium as bone meal or dolomite may contain lead or other heavy metals as contaminants.
- Calcium supplements should not be taken with high fiber meals or with bulk-forming laxatives.
- If using calcium carbonate supplement, take it with meals to assure high stomach acid for maximum absorption. Calcium citrate is the most well absorbed type of calcium.
- Drink plenty of fluids while using supplements to reduce bloating and constipation.

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