



Calcium, the Key to Strong Bones

Keeping your bones strong and healthy requires adequate intake of calcium. 1200 mg of calcium each day is recommended. Calcium may be obtained from the foods and beverages that you choose each day, from supplements, or from a combination of the two. Add up your calcium intake from the list below to insure that you are getting the recommended 1200 mg needed to keep your bones strong.

Your best bet is to obtain calcium from the foods and beverages that you consume. Milk contains Vitamin D, lactose, magnesium and phosphorus which increase the absorption of calcium. Three to four-8 oz glasses daily will meet your calcium requirements and provide your body with more than 25 grams of protein to boot. It is difficult to find a better nutrition bargain than skim milk.

If lactose intolerance is causing you to avoid milk, try using Lactaid® chewable tablets prior to drinking milk or drink smaller amounts of milk at a time.

Zip Up Your Milk

- Add No Added Sugar Nestles Quick or No Added Sugar Carnation Instant Breakfast to your milk
- Heat a cup of milk and add no added sugar hot cocoa mix for a change of pace
- Make no added sugar pudding with evaporated skim milk for a sweet calcium and protein rich treat
- Buy milk boxes (similar to juice boxes) to take on trips or to store at the office
- Add No Added Sugar General Foods Coffee Mixes to hot milk for a delicious drink

If you do not consume 1200 mg from the foods and beverages you choose, then calcium supplements are a good second option. Calcium from bone meal, oyster shells, dolomite or “natural sources” is not recommended due to the possibility of a high lead content. Calcium carbonate and calcium citrate are both good sources of calcium. Calcium carbonate has two times the calcium (by weight) than calcium citrate, so fewer or smaller tablets are required. Calcium citrate is better absorbed (20% greater absorption than calcium carbonate) when low stomach acid is present. Either form of calcium supplement will help you meet your body’s requirement.

Occasionally, people report bloating or gas when beginning to take calcium supplements. This is a temporary adjustment to the increase in calcium supplementation. If you experience this, divide the supplements throughout the day and take with meals (this increases absorption too), or begin with a smaller dose and then build up to the recommended levels.

Did you know...

- 75% of American adults do not meet the current recommendations for calcium intake.
- Your body constantly breaks down and rebuilds bone--so calcium intake throughout life is important.
- Peak bone mass is achieved by age 20. A woman may lose 20% of her bone mass in the first years following menopause.
- In addition to building strong bones and teeth, calcium helps your heart, muscles, and nerves to function properly and your blood to clot.
- Osteoporosis, a disease of weak porous bones that break easily, affects 16% of Americans over age 50. 55% of those over age 50 have low bone mass, increasing their risk for osteoporosis.
- Calcium carbonate supplements are best absorbed when taken with meals--no more than 500 mg of calcium at one time.
- Regular weight bearing exercise, such as walking or strength training, helps to keep your bones strong.
- Adequate Vitamin D allows the body to absorb and utilize calcium. Vitamin D is activated by exposure to sunlight and is found in fortified foods and dairy products.
- When calcium is taken in a chewable or liquid form, it may be absorbed more easily.
- Excessive alcohol consumption and smoking decrease bone density.
- Calcium can interfere with the absorption of iron. Take iron supplements separately, between meals if tolerated.

Food	mg Calcium
Milk, skim evaporated (1/2 cup)	372
Yogurt (8 oz)	315-400
Milk, (8 oz)	300
Milk, nonfat dry (1/3 cup)	300
Milk, soy fortified (8 oz)	250-300
Cheese, Swiss (1 oz)	270
Calcium fortified orange juice	325
Cheese, cheddar (1 oz)	205
Pudding, no added sugar (1/2 cup)	150
Tofu	130-260
Sardines, canned with edible bones	90
Cheese, mozzarella part-skim (1 oz)	85
Cottage cheese (1/2 cup)	75
Cheese, parmesan (1 Tbsp)	70

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Orange (1 medium)	50
Broccoli (1/2 cup)	45
Anchovies, with edible bones (1 oz)	45
Cream Cheese (2 Tbsp)	25

Calcium Content of Selected Supplements

Sugar Free Complete Chewable Vitamins (2)	200 mg
Centrum Complete (1)	162
Centrum Silver (1)	200
Tums-regular strength (1)	200
Tums EX (1)	300
Tums Ultra (1)	400
Tums 500 Calcium Supplement (1)	500
CVS Pharmacy Soft Calcium Chews (1)	500

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