

Calcium

Calcium is a mineral that helps keep bones strong. The preferred source of calcium is through your diet. Most Americans however, have a diet deficient in calcium (averaging only 600-800 mg of calcium a day). Therefore, most require a change in diet or may need to take calcium supplements in addition to changes in the diet.

How much do you need?



19-50 years
51 and over

1,000 mg a day
1,200 mg a day



19-70 years
71 and over

1,000 mg a day
1,200 mg a day

Estimating daily dietary calcium intake

Step 1: Estimate calcium intake from calcium-rich foods			
Product	# of servings	Estimated calcium/ serving (mg)	Total calcium (mg)
Milk (8oz)		x 300	
Yogurt (6 oz)		x 300	
Cheese (1 oz)		x 200	
Fortified food/juice		x 80-1,000	
Step 2: add for non-dairy sources			+250
Total			

The ideal source for calcium should be your diet.

Sources of calcium: Food



Sardines	371 mg/3 Oz.
Macaroni & cheese	362 mg/8 oz. cup
Non-fat milk	302 mg/8 ox. cup
Low-fat yogurt	300 mg/8 oz. cup
Low-fat milk	297 mg/8 oz. cup
Swiss cheese	272 mg/0z.
Mozzarella and Ricotta cheese	200 mg/oz.
Kale (frozen, cooked)	179 mg/8 oz. cup
Ice cream	176 mg/8 oz. cup
American cheese	174 mg/oz.
Salmon	167 mg/3 oz.
Cottage cheese	155 mg/8oz. cup
Shrimp	98 mg/3 oz.
Beans (dried, cooked)	90 mg/8 oz. cup
Broccoli	72 mg/1 spear

If your diet does not provide sufficient amounts of calcium, supplements may be an option. It is important to know how much calcium you need and understand the benefits and potential side effects of taking supplements.

Sources of calcium: Supplements



Calcium carbonate	Cheapest-often a good first choice. Should be taken with food.
Calcium citrate	Is easily absorbed; can be taken with or without food
Calcium lactate	
Calcium gluconate	

Your body can usually only absorb 600 mg or less at one time. If more is needed, take one serving in the morning and another with dinner.