

Calcium and Vitamin D

The Role of Calcium

Calcium is important to postmenopausal Women because, although it cannot prevent osteoporosis on its own, adequate daily intake may help to slow down bone loss. Calcium is a mineral that not only promotes good bone health, but has other benefits that impact your overall well-being.

Recommended Daily Calcium Intake (mg/day)

Age	Male	Female	Pregnant	Lactating
0 – 6 months	200	200		
7 – 12 months	260	260		
1-3	700	700		
4-8	1000	1000		
9-13	1300	1300		
14-18	1300	1300	1300	1300
19-50	1000	1000	1000	1000
51-70	1000	1200		
71+	1200	1200		

(NIH 2016)

The amount of calcium needed for good bone health is influenced by diet, hormones, medications, age, and genetic factors. Furthermore, your recommended daily intake of calcium changes over your lifetime. Therefore, it is important for you to discuss your unique calcium needs with your doctor or healthcare provider.

Sources of Calcium

Most dietary calcium comes from dairy products, but other foods are excellent sources as well. Below is a table of some foods that contain calcium.

Food	Serving Size	Calcium
Grated parmesan cheese	1 oz	390
Collard greens	1 cup	357
Sardines, canned in oil	8 medium	354
Rhubarb, cooked, added sugar	1 cup	348
Yogurt, low fat, fruit flavored	8 oz	345
Gruyere cheese	1 oz	308
Milk, skim	1 cup	303
Calcium – fortified orange juice	1 cup	300
Blackstrap molasses	2 tablespoons	274
Figs, dried	10 figs	269
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	245
Cheddar cheese	1 oz	211
Creamed cottage cheese	1 cup	211
Broccoli, cooked, drained	1 medium spear	205
American cheese processed	1 oz slice	195
Salmon, canned	3 oz	167

It is best to obtain daily requirements from dietary sources, but supplements can be used if you cannot get enough.

calcium in your diet. Talk with your healthcare provider about the use of supplements since there are several different types of calcium and many different supplements available. If you take supplements, the calcium is best absorbed if taken with meals and if the dose is split so that you take no more than 500 mg at one time.

The Role of Vitamin D

For calcium to be effective, it needs to be properly absorbed by the body. Adequate levels of vitamin D are needed for the best calcium absorption. Your body manufactures vitamin D in response to sunlight. Chief dietary sources of vitamin D include Vitamin D-fortified milk and cereals, egg yolks, saltwater fish, and liver. However, some people may need to supplement these natural sources. The amount of vitamin D found in multivitamins is generally enough for proper calcium absorption, but too much vitamin D can be harmful, so be sure to speak to your doctor or healthcare provider before adding a vitamin D supplement to your diet.