

What Does Calcium Do?

- Our bodies use calcium to build and maintain strong bones and teeth.
- Eating high-calcium foods and doing weight-bearing exercise regularly can help slow bone loss as we age.
- Calcium also helps blood clot and keeps muscles and nerves working properly.
- It may help prevent high blood pressure and some forms of cancer.

How Much Calcium Do You Need?

From the beginning of life, calcium counts:

- Older children and teens need the most calcium because nearly half of all bone forms during the teen years. Between the ages of 9 and 18 years, healthy kids should get 1,300 milligrams (mg) calcium each day.
- Healthy adults between the ages of 19 and 50 should aim for 1,000 mg calcium daily.
- Older adults need more calcium because bones lose calcium as we age. This is a particular concern for women after menopause. After age 50, healthy adults should get 1,200 mg calcium daily.

Tips for Getting More Calcium

- Choose milk and dairy foods. Aim for 3 servings of fat-free or low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, or cheese) each day:
 - Make oatmeal or hot chocolate with milk instead of water.
 - Top breakfast cereal with low-fat or fat-free fruit yogurt.
 - Make a vegetable dip by blending plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt with herbs. For a fresh fruit dip, replace herbs with honey and cinnamon.
 - Keep calcium-rich snacks on hand, such as string cheese, pudding and yogurt cups, or single-serve cartons of chocolate milk.
 - Toss pasta and vegetables with a sauce made with ricotta cheese, low-fat milk, and fresh herbs.
 - Blend shredded cheese into casseroles and meatloaf, or serve it with chili or stews.

If You Are Lactose Intolerant . . .

People with lactose intolerance can't digest the natural sugar (lactose) in milk. Milk and dairy foods may cause gas, bloating, or diarrhea. Still, you may not need to completely avoid milk products. Try these tips:

- Have smaller servings of milk products.
- Drink milk with meals rather than by itself.
- Try yogurt and hard cheeses. These have less lactose than milk and may be easier to digest.
- Try lactose-reduced milk products.
- Ask your health care team about taking lactase enzyme tablets. They may help you digest lactose.



- Have other foods with calcium every day:
 - Include calcium-fortified cereal or juice at breakfast.
 - Make sandwiches with calcium-fortified bread.
 - Choose cooked greens or broccoli as your vegetable.
 - Snack on almonds or an orange.

Which Foods Have Calcium?

Calcium per Serving	Foods
300 mg	1 cup milk (fat-free, low-fat, chocolate, or buttermilk) 1 cup fat-free or low-fat yogurt 1 cup calcium-fortified soy beverage 1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice 1½ ounces low-fat natural cheese (such as cheddar, mozzarella, or Swiss) 2 ounces process cheese (such as American) 1 cup ready-to-eat pudding 1 cup macaroni and cheese
200 mg	3 ounces canned salmon (with soft bones) 3 ounces sardines (with soft bones) 1 cup calcium-fortified cereal
150 mg	1 cup cottage cheese ½ cup tofu (made with calcium) 1 slice calcium-fortified bread
100 mg	½ cup frozen yogurt or ice cream ¼ cup almonds ½ cup cooked greens (beet greens, turnip greens, kale, collards, spinach)
50 mg	1 medium orange ½ cup cooked broccoli ½ cup canned white beans