

National Osteoporosis Foundation

BONE BASICS ALERT



Calcium Basics

You know that calcium is a mineral essential for life, but the recent article published in the *British Medical Journal* may have you asking yourself the following questions.

AM I GETTING TOO MUCH CALCIUM?

According to NOF, adults under age 50 need a total of 1,000 mg of calcium from all sources every day. Adults 50 and older need a total of 1,200 mg of calcium from all sources every day. You should only use calcium supplements when you can't get enough calcium for your body's needs from foods alone. Getting too much calcium from supplements may increase the risk of kidney stones and other health problems.

**All sources of calcium includes the amount of calcium you get from both food and supplements.*

WHERE SHOULD I GET MY CALCIUM?

NOF believes that food remains the best source of calcium.

Low-fat and non-fat dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese are high in calcium. For people who have trouble digesting dairy products because of lactose intolerance, lactose-free dairy products and lactase enzyme pills are also available. You can get calcium in smaller amounts from other foods. Some examples are certain green vegetables like bok choy, broccoli and kale as well as canned sardines, salmon and shrimp.

In addition to eating foods that are naturally rich in calcium, you can also choose calcium-fortified foods. When a food is fortified with calcium, it means that calcium has been added to that food. Some brands of juices, soymilk, cereals, English muffins, waffles, breads, snacks and bottled water are fortified with calcium. It's important to count these foods towards your total daily calcium intake. Read the food label to see if a particular product has calcium.



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Calcium Basics *(cont.)*

ADDING CALCIUM-RICH FOODS TO YOUR DIET CAN BE EASY. HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS

	Estimated calcium content in milligrams (mg)
Breakfast	
Fat-free milk, 8 oz.	300
Low-fat yogurt with fruit, 8 oz.	300
Calcium-fortified orange juice, 8 oz.	300
Lunch	
Grated parmesan cheese, 1 tbsp	55
Canned salmon, 3 oz	180
1 orange, medium	50
Snacks	
Dry roasted almonds, 1 oz	75
5 Dried figs	135
Mozzarella cheese, part-skim, 1 oz.	205
Dinner	
Cooked broccoli, 8 oz.	60
Fruit juice with added calcium, 6 oz.	200-345
Frozen yogurt, soft-serve, 4 oz.	100

HOW CAN I KNOW HOW MUCH CALCIUM I GET ON A TYPICAL DAY?

The calcium calculator can help you estimate the amount of calcium you get from food on a typical day. It can also help you learn how much more calcium you need each day from other food sources or supplements.



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Calcium Basics *(cont.)*

HOW TO USE THE CALCIUM CALCULATOR

Step 1: Estimate the number of servings you have on a typical day for each type of food. One serving is equal to approximately:

- 8 oz. or one cup of milk
- 6 oz. of yogurt
- 1 oz. or 1 cubic inch of cheese

The amount of calcium in fortified foods and juices ranges from 80 - 1,000 mg.

Step 2: List the estimated number of servings of each food item under “Servings Per Day.”

Step 3: Multiply the number of “Servings Per Day” by the number of milligrams (mg) under “Calcium.” For example: if you have about two servings of milk per day, multiply 2×300 to get a total of 600 mg of calcium from milk.

Step 4: After you have calculated the total amount of calcium for each product, add these totals in the right hand column to get your Total Daily Calcium Intake.

Note: 250 mg of calcium is automatically added under “Estimated total from other foods.” Most of us get about this amount of calcium each day from other foods like vegetables, breads and other grains.

Step 5: Subtract your final total daily calcium intake from the recommended amount of calcium you need each day. This number is the additional calcium you need each day. You can get this additional calcium by adding calcium-rich foods to your diet or by taking a calcium supplement.



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CALCIUM CALCULATOR

Product	Servings Per Day	Calcium (mg)	Total
Milk (8 oz.)		X 300	=
Yogurt (6 oz.)		X 300	=
Cheese (1 oz. or 1 cubic inch)		X 200	=
Fortified Foods & Juices		X 80 -1,000	=
Estimated total from other foods			= 250
Note: Increase this amount if you get more than 250 mg of calcium from other foods.			
Total Daily Calcium Intake, in mg			=



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