

Extension

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Newsletter

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Calcium-Rich Foods --- More Than a Glass of Milk

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A calcium-rich diet is important for bone health. Children and adolescents need calcium to build their peak bone mass, which is reached by approximately age twenty. Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis.



How Much is Needed?

Age (Years)	Calcium (mg/day)
1-3	500
4-8	800
9-18	1300
19-50	1000
51+	1200

For maximum calcium retention and to build strong bones, children and adults should the following amount of calcium per day.

Choose Fat-Free or Low-Fat

Children under the age of two should not have low-fat milk products, because they need the calories and fat from whole milk for brain development. After age two, start transitioning to low-fat dairy products.

Easy Ways to Get Calcium

Add non-fat dry milk to puddings, breads, muffins, homemade cookies, soups, or even a glass of milk. Recommended amounts are:

- 2 Tbsps. Dry milk sifted into each cup of flour in cakes, cookies or breads.
- 3 Tbsps. Dry milk per cup of fluid milk in puddings or cocoa.
- 4 Tbsps. Dry milk to each cup of hot cereal before cooking.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk in oatmeal, hot cereals, and cream-type soups.
- Add fat-free or low-fat cheese to casseroles, soups, stews, vegetables, and sandwiches.
- Enjoy fat-free or low-fat yogurt straight from the carton, in dips, smoothies, baked potatoes, and with fruits.
- Substitute plain yogurt for some or all of the sour cream in recipes.
- Drink a delicious smoothie made in a blender with frozen fruit and skim milk or calcium fortified juice.
- Make a fruit parfait dessert by layering non-fat yogurt with fresh fruit.
- Add a drained can of white beans to soups or stews.
- Serve calcium fortified foods like orange juice and breads for snacks or at meals.
- Cook with or sprinkle sesame seeds on favorite dishes.

Additional Tips:

- Eat or drink calcium sources throughout the day instead of all at one time. The body can absorb about 500 mg of calcium at one time from food and/or calcium supplements.
- Read food labels to identify good sources of calcium and vitamin D.

Calcium-rich foods	Calcium, mg
1 c. Buttermilk	284
1 c. Milk, whole, low-fat or fat-free	300
1 c. Fortified orange juice	300
½ c. Cottage cheese, 2% fat	78
1 oz. American, process cheese	175
1 oz. Mozzarella, part skim	207
1 oz. Cheddar cheese	204
1 oz. Monterey Jack cheese	211
1 oz. Swiss cheese	272
½ c. Ricotta, part skim	337
½ c. frozen yogurt, soft serve, vanilla	103
1 c. Fruit yogurt, low fat	384
1 c. Plain yogurt, low fat	415
½ c. Chocolate pudding, instant mix w/ low-fat milk	153
1 c. Pinto beans, cooked	82

Calcium-rich foods	Calcium, mg
½ c. White beans, cooked	110
3 oz. Salmon, with bones, canned	180
½ c. Tofu, calcium added	204
1 c. Shredded Chinese cabbage, boiled	158
1 c. Collards, cooked	226
1 c. Kale, cooked	94
1 c. Mustard greens, cooked	104
1 c. Turnip greens, cooked	197
1 c. Broccoli, chopped, frozen, cooked	94
1 oz. Sesame Seeds- roasted	280
1 oz. Almonds	80
Fortified almond or rice milk, amount varies by brand See package	
Fortified cereals and bread products, amount varies by brand See package	

Let's Talk

Getting calcium from food is best because food contains other nutrients, too. If you can't get enough calcium from your diet, calcium supplements are an alternative. Ask your doctor to recommend a supplement. They are not designed to replace food, only supplement it. Calcium supplements are available in tablets, powders, liquids, and chewables. Read the label for the amount and type of calcium. Avoid taking a supplement that contains more than 500 mg. It may keep your body from using the other nutrients in the meal or snack. High doses of calcium at one time can cause stomach upset. Calcium citrate is a supplement that dissolves easily in the stomach and is absorbed efficiently. Bone-meal supplements are not recommended because they may contain toxic metals such as lead.

Recipe for Health: Mac and Cheese Casserole Cups

3 cups skim milk
 2 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 6 ounces, or 1 1/2 cups, reduced-fat, mild, shredded cheddar cheese
 ¾ cup light shredded mozzarella cheese
 ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 8 ounces elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
 paper muffin cups/liners

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. In medium saucepan, slowly add 1 cup of milk to flour, stirring constantly until all lumps have dissolved. Add the remaining milk, stirring thoroughly. Place on stove and simmer 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens. Add 1 cup of the cheddar, mozzarella, and parmesan cheese; stir until blended. Add macaroni, stirring gently to coat well. Line muffin tin with paper muffin cups and place one scoop of mac and cheese mixture into each muffin cup. Top with reserved ½ cup shredded cheddar. Bake 15 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

