

WHY IS CALCIUM IMPORTANT

A balanced diet including calcium is needed to keep our bones healthy and to prevent fractures.

HOW MUCH CALCIUM DO I NEED?

Our bodies use calcium continuously, so we must replace it regularly via diet. Adults with Osteoporosis need up to 1000mg a day.

(Source: National Osteoporosis Society)

DO I NEED CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS?

Food is the best source of all nutrients. However for people following a very restricted diet, supplements of calcium and/or vitamin D may be recommended by your doctor/local dietitian.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF CALCIUM IN THE DIET? – numbers overleaf!

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Oranges and dried fruit contain small amounts of calcium but all fruit and vegetables are a source of nutrients that improve bone health

MEAT & ALTERNATIVES

'Bony fish' such as sardines, pilchards, tinned salmon and whitebait

Seeds such as sesame seeds (sesame seed paste)

Some nuts, including almonds, hazelnuts and brazil nuts



STARCHY FOODS

Some breakfast cereals are calcium enriched- look out for these

Bread and foods made with white, brown and wholemeal flour are also enriched with calcium

DAIRY FOODS

Dairy foods including milk & yoghurts. Although cheese does have calcium, it is very high fat so avoid this as a source

Foods high in fat, sugar and alcohol should be enjoyed in moderation unless advised otherwise by your doctor...

WAYS TO INCREASE CALCIUM IN MY DIET...

DAIRY FOODS

The simplest way to get more calcium is to have one pint of milk a day

Or I could aim for **three portions** of dairy food throughout the day. A portion could be a **small pot of yoghurt** or **200ml milk**

An example day could look like this:

Breakfast: Milk on cereal

Lunch: A pot of yoghurt with a sandwich

Dinner: Fromage frais after your evening meal

Or other options:

- Fruit smoothie made with milk
- Laté coffee or flavoured milkshake

BONY FISH

Aim to have two portions bony fish per week (1 portion= 100g or 3 oz). **The bones contain the most calcium**

You could try:

- Salmon paté: tinned salmon (with bones) blended with natural yoghurt
- Whitebait lightly coated in flour and fried
- Pilchards or sardines on toast

OTHER IDEAS

- ① Try stir-frying using calcium enriched tofu instead of meat
- ② Sprinkle sesame seeds as a crispy topping for potato pies, fruit salads, breakfast cereals & salads
- ③ Add dried fruit or nuts to fruit salads, breakfast cereals or baking

WHAT'S YOUR INTAKE? – use this to find out...

To find out more about the calcium content of foods and drinks visit the osteoporosis society website at www.nos.org.uk

FOOD	PORTION SIZE	Calcium (mg)	FOOD	PORTION SIZE	Calcium (mg)
DAIRY			NUTS/ SEEDS		
Skimmed cow's milk	1/3 pint (200ml)	244	Tahini	1 teaspoon (19g)	130
Semi-skimmed milk	1/3 pint (200ml)	240	Sesame seeds	1 tablespoon (12g)	80
Whole milk	1/3 pint (200ml)	236	Chick peas	1 tablespoon (35g)	56
Lactose free cow's milk	1/3 pint (200ml)	234	Baked beans	2 tablespoons (80g)	42
Plain yoghurt	Small pot (125g)	250	Almonds	6 whole (13g)	31
Fruit fromage frais	Medium pot (100g)	86	Brazil nuts	3 whole (10g)	17
DAIRY ALTERNATIVES			VEGETABLES		
Tofu*	Medium portion (100g)	100-500	Okra- stir fried	Medium portion (60g)	132
Soya milk- enriched	1/3 pint (200ml)	178	Curly Kale	Medium portion (60g)	90
Soya milk- not " "	1/3 pint (200ml)	26	Spinach-boiled	1 tablespoon (40g)	64
Soya yoghurt- enriched	Small pot (125g)	150	Broccoli	Medium portion (85g)	34
Soya yoghurt- not " "	Small pot (125g)	18	Cabbage	Medium portion (95g)	31
CEREALS			FRUIT		
Ready Brek	Medium portion (30g)	360	Orange juice- enriched	1 glass (160ml)	195
Rice Krispies	Medium portion (30g)	135	Orange juice- not " "	1 glass (160ml)	16
White bread	1 slice (28g)	50	Orange	1 small (120g)	56
Wholemeal bread	1 slice (28g)	30	Dried figs	1 (20g)	50
Chapati	1 small (30g)	20	Dried apricots	4 (32g)	23
FISH			EVEN WATER!		
Whitebait	Medium portion (80g)	688	Calcium enriched water	1 Litre	300
Tinned pilchards	2 fish (110g)	275	Hard water**	1 Litre	111
Tinned sardines	½ can (60g)	300	Bottled waters	1 Litre	40-70
Breaded scampi	10 pieces (150g)	315			
Anchovies	Small tin (50g)	150			
Tinned salmon	Medium portion (100g)	91			

SOURCE: Food Standards Agency (2002), McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Foods.*Levels vary according to processing method, therefore please check the label of the brand you use. **Thames water, level quoted for Oxford 2002.

OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTHY BONES...

KEEP TO A HEALTHY WEIGHT Know your Body Mass Index (BMI) which is a measure of how healthy your weight is. A BMI between 20kgm² to 25kgm² is good for bones.



If you are **underweight**, you may be advised by your doctor that you need to gain weight for your bone health.

Alternatively, if you have been advised to **lose weight**, remember that a high calcium diet **does not have to be high in fat or energy**. Most low fat dairy products have just as much calcium in them. Try using reduced fat cheddar, low fat yoghurts and skimmed milk.



VITAMIN D helps your body absorb calcium and use it properly. The main source is from sunlight on our skin. There is a small amount in oily fish, margarine, eggs and fortified breakfast cereal.



REGULAR EXERCISE such as walking, dancing, aerobics and football helps keep muscles strong. Muscle protects our bones and helps reduce the risk of falling.



ALCOHOL in excess causes the body to lose calcium. Recommended limits are no more than 3 units a day for men and 2 units a day for women.



SALT - high intakes can increase calcium loss from your body. Try to avoid eating too many processed foods and limit the amount of salt added to food.



CAFFEINE - high intakes (more than 4 cups of strong coffee per day) may reduce bone mineral density. Caffeine is in coffee, tea & cola drinks. Be careful and moderate.



SMOKING causes bones to lose calcium. It's another reason to stop!