

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 ALTERNATIVES

Dairy alternatives that have been enriched with calcium. For example- **rice milk**, **oat milk**, **soya milk** and **soya yoghurts**

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 ALTERNATIVES

Aim to have one pint of enriched soya/ rice/ oat milk per day. Either on its own, in milkshakes, smoothies or hot drinks . Use it in cooking for puddings and sauces.

Alternatively, aim for **three portions** of a calcium enriched ‘dairy alternative’ every day. For example: fortified **oat milk** with breakfast cereal; **soya cheese** in a sandwich at lunch and a small pot of **soya yoghurt** after your evening meal.

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)
DAIRY ALTERNATIVES		
Soya milk- enriched	1/3 pint (200ml)	178
Soya milk- not " "	1/3 pint (200ml)	26
Soya yoghurt- enriched	Small pot (125g)	150
Soya yoghurt- not " "	Small pot (125g)	18
Oat milk- enriched	1/3 pint (200ml)	240
Rice milk- enriched	1/3 pint (200ml)	130
Soya Cheese*	Matchbox size (30g)	400
First Quality Swedish Glace ice-cream	100ml	120
Tofu*	Medium portion (100g)	100-500
CEREALS		
Cereals 'enriched'	Medium portion (30g)	135-360
White bread	1 slice (28g)	50
Wholemeal bread	1 slice (28g)	30
Chapatti	1 small (30g)	20
FISH		
Whitebait	Medium portion (80g)	688
Tinned pilchards	2 fish (110g)	275
Tinned sardines	½ can (60g)	300
Breaded scampi	10 pieces (150g)	315
Anchovies	Small tin (50g)	150
Tinned salmon	Medium portion (100g)	91

FOOD	PORTION SIZE	Calcium (mg)
NUTS/ SEEDS		
Tahini	1 teaspoon (19g)	130
Sesame seeds	1 tablespoon (12g)	80
Chick peas	1 tablespoon (35g)	56
Baked beans	2 tablespoons (80g)	42
Almonds	6 whole (13g)	31
Brazil nuts	3 whole (10g)	17
VEGETABLES		
Okra- stir fried	Medium portion (60g)	132
Curly Kale	Medium portion (60g)	90
Spinach-boiled	1 tablespoon (40g)	64
Broccoli	Medium portion (85g)	34
Cabbage	Medium portion (95g)	31
Watercress	Quarter of a bunch (20g)	34
FRUIT		
Orange juice- enriched	1 glass (160ml)	195
Orange juice- not " "	1 glass (160ml)	16
Orange	1 small (120g)	56
Dried figs	1 (20g)	50
Dried apricots	4 (32g)	23
Currents	1 tablespoon (25g)	23
Dried mixed fruit	1 tablespoon (25g)	18
EVEN WATER!		
Calcium enriched water	1 Litre	300
Hard water**	1 Litre	111
Bottled waters	1 Litre	40-70

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**. Dairy alternatives advertised as 'light' or 'unsweetened' have just as much calcium in them.

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!