



Calcium

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? Calcium is necessary for bone health, muscle contraction, dilation and relaxation of blood vessels, hormone secretion & nervous system function.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GET?

Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendation:

ages 9 to 18	1300 mg per day
ages 19 to 50	1000 mg per day
greater than 50	1200 to 1500 mg per day

Remember, more isn't necessarily better! Peak bone mass is achieved by age 25 or 30, hence deposits made when younger are necessary for healthy, strong bones with maturation.

WHAT IS CALCIUM?

Calcium is a positively-charged, inorganic particle. It needs to be neutralized in the gut before it can be absorbed. Different supplements combine calcium to various substances in order to facilitate absorption. Absorption is the highest when the elemental calcium is less than 500 mg and adequate vitamin D is present. Here is a summary of two of the basic, easy-to-find formulations.

CALCIUM CARBONATE

- easy to find
- inexpensive
- is about 40% elemental calcium
(Which means 1000mg dose contains 400mg elemental calcium and 600mg carbonate)
- best absorbed with food
- may cause constipation or gas
- look for pure forms for safety (pregnancy & children)

There are many supplemental forms of calcium available.

It comes in tablets that are swallowed, chewable antacids, liquids, gummies, chocolate chews, etc. Be sure to drink plenty of water for good health and when supplementing with calcium. If you are lactose intolerant or don't like milk and need supplementation, you may need to take one dose in the morning and one in the evening to maximize absorption.

NOTE: There are potential drug interactions that may increase or decrease the absorption of calcium or the medication. Extreme diets (very high in protein or fiber) or excessive caffeine may also affect absorption. Rumors of pop depleting bones are not necessarily accurate. Studies show that carbonation is not the problem, it is the caffeine. One cup of coffee equates to approximately a 2 to 3 mg per day loss of calcium. Minimal amounts such as this will not affect the bone but excessive consumption could affect bone mass. This doesn't give the green light for carbonation or caffeine...moderation is best!

NATURAL SOURCES *are better absorbed.*

dairy products

MILK (1 cup)	300 mg
<i>fortified</i> ALMOND or SOY MILK, ORANGE JUICE	

YOGURT (1 cup)	350 to 450
CHEESE STICK (1 oz.)	225 mg
COTTAGE CHEESE (1 cup)	140 mg
ICE CREAM (1/2 cup)	110 mg
FROZEN YOGURT (1/2 cup)	90 mg

others

TOFU (1/2 cup)	250 mg
CANNED SALMON (3 oz.)	180 mg
KALE (1 cup, chopped)	100 mg
BROCCOLI (1 cup)	180 mg
BREAD (1 slice, fortified)	70 mg

NOTE: amounts may vary slightly depending on the brand.

CALCIUM CITRATE

- take with or without food
- is about 21% elemental calcium
- good when on a daily acid reducing agent (ie one prazole)
- better tolerated but more costly
- good for absorption problems and bowel issues

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