

Get Milk!

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Milk and other dairy products are great sources of calcium. Calcium plays an important role in the body. It is the most abundant mineral in the body and most of it is found in the bones and teeth. Calcium is also found in muscle and blood. It is crucial for maintaining bone health as well as participating in muscle contractions. Recent research has shown that calcium may also play a role in weight management and in controlling hypertension (high blood pressure).

The best sources of calcium are dairy products. Milk products such as yogurt, cheese, ice cream and buttermilk are all great sources that are easily absorbed in the body. There is some concern regarding the calorie content of these foods because of the fat content, however all dairy products come in low fat or fat free alternatives. Decreasing the fat will not alter the calcium content. Milk is also an excellent source of Vitamin D, which is essential for the absorption of calcium into the bones. Other foods such as broccoli, bok choy, collards, kale and spinach are also fair sources of calcium. However these foods also contain oxalate and fiber, which may impair the calcium absorption. Other foods that are rich in calcium are shellfish, almonds, Brazil nuts, dried beans, salmon and sardines (canned with soft bones). The food industry has also fortified orange juice, cereal and bread to make these foods as rich in calcium as their dairy counterparts.

Here are the recommended amounts based on the RDA's:

Age	Amount of Calcium in mg
Infant (0-6 mo.)	400
Infant (6 mo.- 1 year)	600
Children (1-5 years)	800
Children (6-10 years)	1200
Children (11-24 years)	1500
Nonpregnant adult women (25-50)	1000
Pregnant or lactating women	1200
Post menopausal women (not on estrogen)	1500
Post menopausal women (on estrogen)	1000
Adult men	1000
Women and men over 65 years	1500

*The upper limit is 2000 mg/day

Here are some common food sources:

Food Source	Amount of Calcium (mg)
2 oz. Swiss cheese	530
8 oz. milk	300
8 oz. orange juice (with Ca added)	300
Swiss Miss Fat-free hot cocoa	300
2 Kellogg's Homestyle waffles	300
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Total cereal	300
6 oz. yogurt	300
2 oz. sardines	240
6 oz. cooked turnips	220
3 oz. almonds	210
1 cup ice cream	176- 236
4 oz. tofu	108

If you are lactose intolerant, try Lactaid milk or enriched soy or rice milk. If you need to supplement Calcium in your diet look for 500 mg. of either calcium citrate or calcium carbonate with vitamin D added to it.