

Increasing Calcium in Your Diet

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What is Calcium?

Calcium is a very important mineral in your body. Ninety-nine percent of calcium in the body is found in the bones and teeth. A very small amount is found in body fluids like blood.

Why is calcium important in the diet?

The most important job for calcium is to build strong bones and teeth. This is very important for all children, especially for adolescents. Ninety percent of adult bone mass is in place by about age 17. Calcium is also used for other necessary body functions. If we do not eat enough foods that contain calcium, the body will take calcium from our bones to use for these other vital functions. The body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. Expose your skin to a little sunshine and your body will make vitamin D. You can also drink milk fortified with vitamin D or try vitamin D-fortified juices.

Children with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), may have nutritional deficiencies of calcium secondary to poor appetite, malabsorption or as a side effect to certain medications, particularly steroids.

How much calcium should children eat?

Ages 1-3	500 milligrams
Ages 4-8	800 milligrams
Ages 9-18	1300 milligrams
Ages 19+	1000 milligrams

What foods are rich in calcium?

Milk and other dairy products are the major sources of calcium in the American diet. There are other, non-dairy sources of calcium and enriched, calcium fortified foods.

Suggestions for increasing calcium intake in children

- Drink milk instead of soda or juice. Drink hot chocolate milk on cold days (Okay to add chocolate to milk - same amount of calcium).
- Choose foods made with cheese, e.g., pizza, cheeseburger, grilled cheese sandwiches.

- Top salads, chips, popcorn with cheese.
- Make a smoothie with fruit, ice cream and milk.
- Make instant pudding for snack.
- Munch on cheese and crackers.
- Add milk to soups and hot cereal.
- Dip fruits and vegetables in yogurt.
- Add crunchy breakfast cereal to fruit yogurt.
- Serve broccoli with cheese sauce.
- Add tofu made with calcium to stir fry, soup and other foods.
- Make a salad with dark green, leafy vegetables.
- At breakfast, have a glass of calcium fortified orange juice.
- Add flavor to pasta dishes with ricotta or other cheese.
- Order a frozen yogurt cone at the drive-thru.
- Try rice pudding with low fat milk for dessert.
- Add a slice of cheese to sandwiches.

Calcium-Rich Foods

Dairy (mg)	Serving Size	Calcium
Plain yogurt, fat-free, low fat	1 cup	415-450
Chocolate milk shake	10 ounces	375
Fruit yogurt, low fat	1 cup	315
Milk, fat-free, low fat, whole	1 cup	300
Chocolate milk	1 cup	300
Soft serve ice cream	½ cup	115
Ice cream	½ cup	85
Ricotta cheese, part skim	½ cup	340
Swiss cheese	1 slice (1 oz.)	270
Mozzarella cheese	1 ounce	200
Cheddar cheese	1 slice (1 oz.)	200
American cheese	1 slice (1 oz.)	175
Cottage cheese	½cup	75
Vegetables		
Spinach, fresh or cooked	½cup	120
Turnip greens, cooked	½cup	100
Bok Choy, fresh or cooked	½cup	80
Collards, fresh or cooked	½cup	75
Kale, cooked	½cup	45
Broccoli, cooked	½cup	45
Calcium-fortified foods		
Frozen yogurt, fat-free	½cup	450

Orange juice, calcium-fortified	1 cup (8 oz.)	300
Soy milk, calcium added	1 cup (8 oz.)	300
Tofu made with calcium	½ cup	260
Total cereal	¾ cup	250

Combination Foods

Baked potato with cheese	1	350
Pizza, cheese	1 slice	220
Taco	1 small	220
Macaroni and cheese	½ cup	180
Tomato soup with milk	1 cup	160
Burrito with beans and cheese	1	100

Other foods

Sardines, with bones	3 ounces	370
Salmon, with bones	3 ounces	180
Almonds	1/3 cup	125
Tortilla, medium	1	60
Orange, medium	1	50
Bread, white or whole wheat	1 slice	30