

## Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D are two nutrients that are essential not only for healthy bones, but also for overall physical health. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. Current research suggests that calcium and/or vitamin D have a role in lowering blood pressure, reducing weight and excess body fat, and reducing the risk of certain cancers, including breast cancer and colon cancer. Good nutrition for the bones is good nutrition for the whole body.

## Vitamin D and supplements

Some calcium supplements have vitamin D added and vitamin D is also available separately. The dose does not have to be taken at the same time as the calcium to be effective.

An adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D is only one part of an osteoporosis prevention or treatment program. Along with weight-bearing exercise, getting enough calcium and vitamin D is a strategy that helps strengthen bones at any age. These approaches may not be enough to stop bone loss; other therapies may be prescribed. In addition to diet and exercise, it is important to speak to your doctor about keeping your bones strong throughout your life.

# CALCIUM

## Information Guide



## The Importance of Calcium

A well-balanced diet containing the recommended amount of calcium is an important component of bone health. Calcium is essential for building and maintaining bone in the early years of life and for slowing the rate of bone loss later in life. National nutrition surveys indicate that many women and young girls consume less than half the amount of calcium recommended to grow and maintain healthy bones. Many men do not get the recommended amount of calcium in their diet either.

## How much do you need each day?

The Creighton University Osteoporosis Research Center recommends the following guidelines established by the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes from 1998:

Age Group	Calcium Intake (mg/day)
Children (1-3 years)	500
Children (4-8 years)	800
Teenagers (9-18 years)	1,300
Pregnant/breastfeeding women (younger than 18)	1,300
Pregnant/breastfeeding women (18 and older)	1,000
Women (19-50 years)	1,000
Women (51 and over)	1,200
Men (19-50 years)	1,000
Men (51 and over)	1,200

## How do you get enough calcium?

The best way to get enough calcium is by eating and drinking foods that naturally contain calcium.

“**Three-a-day**” is an easy way to remember that three daily servings from the dairy group – milk, cheese, yogurt – will help most children and adults meet calcium needs while supplying an abundance of other essential nutrients too. One serving provides approximately 300 mg of calcium. A serving equals one cup (8 oz.) milk or one cup (8 oz.) yogurt or 2 oz. cheese. Skim milk, low-fat yogurt and low-fat cheese are excellent sources of calcium for people trying to maintain low fat diets.

Calcium can also be obtained from calcium-fortified foods. Calcium is sometimes added to orange juice, bread, cereal and other foods; however, the absorption of calcium from fortified foods may not be as good as the absorption of calcium from dairy foods. The amount of calcium in fortified foods is listed on the Nutrition Facts label.

## Reading the Nutritional Facts Label for Calcium

Look for the Daily Value % (DV) for calcium. To convert DV% to milligrams of calcium, simply replace the % sign with a zero. For example, on this Nutrition Facts label from a carton of yogurt, the calcium DV of 20% would be equal to 200 mg calcium per serving.

(Note: This conversion works only for calcium, not for other nutrients on the label.)

## Adding Calcium to Your Diet

- Add a dairy product to every meal.
- Get a double dose at breakfast with calcium fortified cereal and milk.
- Try low-fat yogurt for desserts or snacks.
- Make a smoothie with any combination of yogurt, milk, calcium-fortified orange juice, and fresh or frozen fruit.
- Keep low fat string cheese and cartons of yogurt readily available in the office fridge.
- Add a tablespoon or two of nonfat powdered dry milk to a cup of coffee, a cup of milk, a cup of cocoa, as well as hot cereal and most recipes.
- Drink milk or calcium-fortified juice instead of soft drinks.
- Top a salad with shredded cheese.

## Calcium Supplements

When calcium from the diet is not sufficient, a supplement may be needed. A variety of calcium supplements are available, but not all are well absorbed. Calcium supplements are best absorbed when taken with a meal and in doses of 500-600 mg or less at a time. If you need a calcium supplement, we recommend the following, as they have been tested and have proven to be well absorbed.

**Tums**<sup>®</sup>: 200 mg, **Tums EX**<sup>®</sup>: 300 mg, **Tums Ultra**<sup>®</sup>: 400 mg,  
**Tums BoneHealth**<sup>®</sup>: 500 mg

**Oscal**<sup>®</sup>: 250 or 500 mg, chewable or tablet, with or without vitamin D

**Citracal**<sup>®</sup>: 300 mg, effervescent or tablet

**Caltrate**<sup>®</sup>: 600 mg tablet, with or without vitamin D, minerals, and/or soy

**Posture**<sup>®</sup>: 600 mg, with phosphorus

**Viactiv**<sup>®</sup> calcium chews: 500 mg, with vitamin D and vitamin K\*

\*check with your doctor before taking Viactiv if you are on a blood thinner

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 container (170g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 100	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 5mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 70mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 6g	<b>2%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 17g	
Vitamin A 0%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 20%	• Iron 0%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.