



Calcium

Did You Know?

People in the following groups are at increased risk for not getting enough calcium.

- Postmenopausal women
- Vegans
- Women of childbearing age not experiencing menstrual cycles

If you fall into one of these categories, consider talking with your doctor about possible ways for you to prevent problems with calcium deficiency.

Calcium is an important mineral found in many foods. Most calcium in the body is stored in teeth and bones to help maintain their structure and hardness. Calcium is necessary for muscle mobility, nerve messaging, blood flow, and hormone and enzyme release.

How much do I need?

- 1,300 milligrams per day for children ages 9-18
- 1,000 milligrams per day for women ages 19-50 and men ages 19-70
- 1,200 milligrams per day for women ages 51-70 and adults 71 or older.
- For recommendations for infants, children, and pregnant women, check out the chart in CSU Extension's Fact Sheet: [Dietary Supplements: Vitamins and Minerals](#).

Food Sources

Calcium is found in a wide variety of foods. Most people in the United States get the majority of their calcium from dairy products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt. In addition, vegetables like kale, broccoli, and Chinese cabbage as well as fish such as sardines and salmon are excellent sources. Calcium can be fortified in foods such as breakfast cereals, fruit juices, and tofu.

What happens if I don't get enough?

Calcium deficiency may not be obvious in the short term since the body receives calcium from bones and teeth when needed. Long term effects of calcium deficiency can result in decreased bone density and increased risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures. Symptoms of serious calcium deficiency include tingling in the fingers, convulsions, and abnormal heart rhythms.

Can I get too much?

Too much calcium can cause constipation and limit the body's ability to absorb iron or zinc. In addition, high calcium levels from dietary supplements increase risk of kidney stones and may increase risk of developing prostate cancer or heart disease.

