Calcium

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body. Calcium is stored in the bones and teeth where it acts as a calcium bank and provides strength to bones. When blood levels of calcium drop below normal, the body takes calcium from this bank. Your body also uses calcium for muscle, heart, and nerve function. It is important to eat calcium-rich foods everyday so that calcium stores are not depleted.

If calcium intake is low, you may be at risk for osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones and causes them to break easily. Eating calcium-rich foods every day and exercising regularly will help to prevent osteoporosis.

Excellent sources: > 200 mg
1 c milk, buttermilk, or eggnog
1 c yogurt
1 c calcium-fortified orange juice
1 oz cheddar, Swiss, or Monterey cheese
3 oz canned sardines with bones
1 c fortified soy or rice milk
1 c boiled spinach or collard greens
1 c figs, dried
½ c ricotta

Good sources: 100-199 mg
¼ c calcium-fortified cereal
3 oz canned salmon with bones
4 oz pudding
½ block tofu (made with calcium)
1 c cottage cheese
1 oz mozzarella, gouda, or feta cheese*
1 oz American cheese
1 c cooked turnip greens
1 c edamame

Fair sources: < 100 mg
½ c ice cream or frozen yogurt
1 c garbanzo beans, canned
½ c hummus
1 c cooked broccoli
½ c almonds
1 flour tortilla
1 c boiled kale or chard

* If you are pregnant avoid feta cheese

You may need to take a calcium supplement if you are not getting the recommended amount of calcium from foods. Talk with your Dietitian or Doctor about which supplement is best for you.

Tips for taking calcium supplements:
- Do not take more than 500 mg of calcium at one time.
- Calcium carbonate should be taken with meals. Calcium citrate can be taken with or without meals.
- If you have lower levels of stomach acid (such as if you have had stomach surgery or are taking an acid suppressant), calcium citrate may be better absorbed than calcium carbonate.

DAILY CALCIUM NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>milligrams (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-18</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-50</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-70 (men)</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-70 (women)</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;70</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pregnant/lactating women
<18 years 1300
19-50 years 1000