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Calcium

Calcium, the predominant mineral in bones and teeth, helps to build and keep them strong. Calcium also helps muscles and nerves work properly. It even plays a role in blood clotting and regulating blood pressure. Calcium deficiency in childhood can show up as stunted bone growth.

In adult women, the condition known as osteoporosis (weak, thin bones) has been linked with inadequate calcium intakes. To get the recommended amount of calcium, eat 2 to 3 servings of calcium-rich foods, such as low-fat dairy foods. Good sources of calcium include all dairy products, fortified soy and rice milk, and calcium-fortified juice. Green leafy vegetables, dried beans, and canned fish with bones are also good calcium sources.

Recommended Daily Dietary Reference Intake for Calcium

This table presents Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) in **bold type** and Adequate Intakes (AI) in regular type followed by an asterisk (*) (in milligrams [mg]). RDA and AI may both be used as goals for individual intake.

| <i>Infants</i> | | <i>Males</i> | | <i>Pregnant</i> | |
|-------------------|------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Birth to 6 months | 210* | 9-18 years | 1300* | ≤18 years | 1300* |
| 7-12 months | 270* | 19-50 years | 1000* | 19-50 years | 1000* |
| | | 51-70+ years | 1200* | | |
| <i>Children</i> | | <i>Females</i> | | <i>Lactating</i> | |
| 1-3 years | 500* | 9-18 years | 1300* | ≤18 years | 1300* |
| 4-8 years | 800* | 19-50 years | 1000* | 19-50 years | 1000* |
| | | 51-70+ years | 1200* | | |

Calcium Content of Foods (mg)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Whole milk, 1 cup | 291 | Cottage cheese, 1 oz | 204 |
| Skim milk, 1 cup | 302 | Cream cheese, 2 tablespoons | 23 |
| Goat's milk, 1 cup | 326 | Half and half, 1 tablespoon | 40 |
| Soy milk, 1 cup | 10 | Sardines, with bones, 1 oz | 90 |
| Soy milk, calcium fortified 1 cup | 300 | Salmon, canned, with bones, 3 oz | 181 |
| Yogurt, vanilla, 8 oz | 350 | Broccoli, cooked, ½ cup | 122 |
| Evaporated milk, 2 tablespoons | 80 | Turnip greens, cooked, ½ cup | 99 |
| Ice cream, vanilla, ½ cup | 138 | Tofu, ½ cup | 130 |
| Frozen yogurt, ½ cup | 106 | Almonds, 1 oz | 73 |
| Cheddar cheese, 1 oz | 204 | Dried beans, cooked, ½ cup | 80 |