

CALCIUM

INFORMATION TO SUPPORT CALCIUM INTAKE IN ADULTS

Calcium is one of the most important minerals needed for good health. It is essential to have the right amount of calcium in all stages of life, from birth and beyond. It is recommended that women 19 – 50 years (including women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, and lactating) should have 1000mg of calcium every day.

Risk of calcium deficiency

Calcium deficiency can increase the risk of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a common disease which happens when bones are weak leading to a higher risk of fractures or breaks from bumps or falls. If we don't eat the right amount of calcium, the body will use calcium stores from bones which will make the bones weak. If you are concerned about your calcium levels, see your GP for a consultation and blood test.

Role of vitamin D and calcium

Vitamin D is also important because it helps with calcium absorption that builds strong bones and helps control or manage calcium in the blood. To maintain good health it is recommended that men and women 19 – 50 years have 5 micrograms of vitamin D every day. Vitamin D deficiency affects over 1 in 5 Australian adults. Having enough vitamin D and calcium levels can reduce the risks of fractures.



HOW TO GET YOUR VITAMIN D INTAKE:

- Fish (tuna or salmon)
- Fortified food like milk or margarine
- Calcium supplements
- Safe sun exposure

Role of physical activity and calcium for healthy bones

Regular physical activity is also important to help keep bones and muscles healthy and strong. There are specific types of exercises that are important to include in our daily routine to help with improving bone cell growth, leading to stronger, healthier bones. It is recommended to do these exercises at least 3 times each week.

Exercise tips to maintain bone strength

- 10 vertical jumps before breakfast, lunch and dinner
- 10 - 30 minutes of continuous brisk walking or jogging – you could mix it up by alternating 2 minutes of walking with 30 seconds of jogging
- Do 2 sets of “sit-to-stands” or squat 10 times – challenge yourself by holding 500g cans of food or hand weights in each hand or increasing the sets
- Playing with your children is great for your bones – jumping/bouncing games such as star jumps, skipping or hopscotch are fun options

Foods containing calcium

Food	Amount
Milk and milk products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One cup of milk (250ml) • Yoghurt (200g) • Calcium fortified milk (250g) 	300mg
Leafy green vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup of broccoli, bok choy, Chinese cabbage and spinach 	100mg
Fish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned salmon with bones (100g) • Sardines, in water (60g) 	~400mg
Tofu: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft and firm tofu (100g) 	80 - 160mg

Fortified food products

Breakfast cereals (1 cup)	200mg
Orange juice (100mg)	80mg
Bread (2 slices)	200mg

TIPS TO INCREASE CALCIUM INTAKE

Breakfast ideas

- Glass of milk, and peanut butter on calcium fortified wholegrain toast and a piece of fruit
- Milk with a cup of calcium-fortified breakfast cereal
- Add muesli and fruit with a cup of yoghurt

Lunch/Dinner ideas

- Firm tofu in a stir fry or curry and add nuts (e.g. almonds, hazelnuts, sesame) for a crunch
- Tuna or salmon salad
- Baked tuna or salmon with either vegetables, pasta or in vegetable bakes

- Add calcium rich vegetables (e.g. broccoli, spinach or bok choy) to stir fries, casseroles, omelettes or vegetable bakes

Snacks ideas

- Handful of raw or roasted almonds (with no added salt)
- Vegetable sticks with low-fat Greek yoghurt as a dip
- Cheddar or other hard cheeses with vegetable sticks or crackers