

Calcium Facts

Did You Know?

- That 99% of calcium is stored in the bones.
- 1200mg is equivalent of approximately 4 cups milk
- We need calcium as we age because a small amount of old bone is absorbed and new bone is made in our body each day. Twenty percentage of bone calcium is removed and replaced each year.
- That a diet low in calcium leads to:
 - Osteoporosis- is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break.
 - Bone loss in the jaw-can lead to problems chewing, tooth loss and poorly fitting dentures.
 - Hypertension-high blood pressure can lead to strokes and heart attacks in some people.
- Lactose intolerance is when you cannot digest the lactose in milk.

Sources of Calcium

- That adding 3 servings of low-fat dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese has helped to reduce the incidence of many cancers such as colon cancer. (Utah State Extension, Joanna Wilkins and Pauline Williams, <http://extension.usu.edu/cooperative/saltlake/index.cfm/cid.785/>)
- Calcium is added to orange juice, cereal, waffles, breakfast bars and cranberry juice—labeled calcium fortified
- Non-fat and low-fat milk and cheeses offer good choices to get calcium without increasing saturated fat intake

Calcium Supplement Guidelines

- The best strategy to prevent kidney stones is to consume appropriate amounts of calcium to meet your needs every day
- To avoid calcium toxicity it is recommended that you do not take more than 2,500 milligrams of calcium per day
- High calcium intakes can lead to constipation, an increased chance for developing calcium kidney stones and may inhibit the absorption of iron and zinc from food

Osteoporosis

- Women begin losing bone mass around the age of 30 and it continues through menopause
- 25 percent of women over the age of 50 years suffer from osteoporosis due to youthful years of not consuming enough calcium on a daily basis
- Weaken, hollow, brittle bones that break easily
- Leads to crippling deformities, irreparable fractures and even death
- A hip or pelvic bone suddenly fractures into fragments that cannot be reassembled
- Osteoporosis is preventable
- In its advanced stages, is very painful

- Effects the hip, wrist and spine

Vitamin D

- Vitamin D will increase the amount of calcium absorbed by your bones
- An easy way to get vitamin D is being outdoors
- Sun is an excellent source of the vitamin D
- Good dietary sources of Vitamin D are cod liver oil, fatty fish (tuna, salmon & sardines) and fortified milk and cereal
- Weight bearing exercise – some examples are walking, jogging, running, stair climbing, skipping rope, skiing and impact-producing sports

Supplements

- A second-best strategy is to take calcium
- No more than 2500mg calcium a day should be taken
- Multivitamin/mineral supplements contain only small amounts of calcium
- Too much calcium can interfere with iron and zinc absorption
- Non-chewable calcium pills should dissolve in 6 ounces vinegar in 30 minutes or less
- Supplements manufactures do not have to prove anything before marketing their products
- “USP” on the label indicates that the supplements meets voluntary U.S. Pharmacopeia standards
- Calcium supplements are absorbed best if taken with food
- If not taken with meals, absorption may be about 10% lower
- Can take one at bedtime to improve overnight bone health activity
- The cost of supplements is not necessarily a good indicator of their quality

Sources: Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

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