

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist is your medication expert and can provide advice and information on a wide range of health issues

CALCIUM

Keeping Your Bones Strong

Calcium is the mineral that gives bones their strength and flexibility. Eating a well-balanced diet that's rich in calcium is one of the best preventive measures against osteoporosis. Adults older than 50 need 1000-1500 mg of calcium every day to preserve bone mass.

More on Calcium

- ◆ Dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yogurt, are the richest sources of calcium. If you are concerned about the fat content, buy no-fat or low-fat products.
- ◆ Calcium from vegetables is not as well absorbed by the body. Strict vegetarians who do not take milk products might require a calcium supplement.
- ◆ Try to get your calcium from food. If you can't get enough, you should consider taking a calcium supplement.
- ◆ Your body needs vitamin D to help it absorb calcium. Most of us obtain enough vitamin D from food or through sun exposure. Milk is also high in vitamin D. If you do not spend any time in the sun, or do not drink milk daily, you may need a daily multivitamin with 400-800 IU of vitamin D.

Calcium Supplements

- ◆ Read the labels on calcium supplements carefully. It is the amount of elemental calcium that counts, not the total weight of calcium salt in each tablet.

For example, 500 mg of calcium carbonate contains 200 mg of elemental calcium, whereas 500 mg of calcium gluconate contains only 45 mg of elemental calcium.

- ◆ Don't take calcium from dolomite or bone meal — they may contain lead or other toxic metals.
- ◆ If you take more than one calcium tablet a day, don't take it all at the same time — calcium is better absorbed if taken in smaller amounts.
- ◆ For some people, calcium supplements cause stomach upset, constipation or nausea. Try different calcium products to find one that's right for you.

How Much Calcium Do I Need?

Your body's need for calcium changes throughout life. The Osteoporosis Society of Canada recommends:

Age	Daily Intake
7-9	700 mg
10-12 (boys)	900 mg
10-12 (girls)	1200-1400 mg
13-16	1200-1400 mg
17-18	1200 mg
19-49	1000 mg
50+	1000-1500 mg ¹

¹ A minimum of 1000 mg is recommended, but more may be advisable if the risk of osteoporosis is high.



Examples of Calcium-Rich Foods:

	Calcium per Serving
• firm cheese (1" x1" x3" piece - 50 g)	350 mg
• milk (1 cup - 250 ml)	300 mg
• yogurt, plain (3/4 cup - 175 ml)	300 mg
• soft cheese (1" x1" x3" piece - 50 g)	250 mg
• salmon, canned with bones (3 oz - 90 g)	250 mg
• almonds (1/3 cup - 75 ml)	150 mg
• tofu, made with calcium (3 oz - 90 g)	150 mg
• bok choy or kale, cooked (1/2 cup - 125 ml)	75 mg
• broccoli, cooked (3/4 cup - 175 ml)	50 mg
• kidney beans, lima beans, lentils (1 cup - 250 ml)	50 mg

**For more information,
ASK YOUR PHARMACIST!**