

Increasing Calcium in Your Diet

Why should I include more calcium in my diet?

Everyone needs calcium throughout his or her lifetime for building or maintaining strong bones. It is also important for building healthy teeth, regulating heartbeat and muscle contractions, and clotting blood, and during pregnancy. Calcium may play a role in maintaining healthy blood pressure and preventing certain types of cancer. If you don't supply your body with enough calcium, it takes what it needs from your bones. Over time, this can put you at risk for developing osteoporosis (a bone-thinning disease).

Dietitian name
Phone number



AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

IMPORTANT POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Eat at least three servings of calcium-rich foods every day. Children and adolescents ages 9 to 18 and adults over 50 may need at least four calcium-rich servings each day.
- Exercise regularly. Weight-bearing exercises, like walking or jogging, for 20–30 minutes at least three times a week can help keep your bones strong.
- Scan food labels for high-calcium products. Look for foods that contain 20% or more of the Daily Value (DV) for calcium.
- Eating a wide variety of foods will help ensure that you are getting enough calcium. Talk with your doctor or registered dietitian before taking a calcium supplement.

NOTES:

SAMPLE MENU FOR INCREASING CALCIUM

BREAKFAST

Calcium-fortified orange juice* (½ cup)
Oatmeal (½ cup) prepared with milk*
Whole-wheat toast (2 slices) topped with margarine (2 tsp) and jam (1tbsp)
Cafe latte*

LUNCH

Cheeseburger* (1½ oz cheese, 3 oz ground beef) on a toasted bun (1) with mustard (1 tbsp), ketchup (1 tbsp), sliced tomato (2 oz), and lettuce
Crunchy baby carrot sticks (½ cup)

Vanilla yogurt* (1 cup) topped with fresh blueberries (½ cup)

Milk* (1 cup)

SNACK

Whole-grain crackers (4)
Cheddar cheese* (½ oz)
Fresh apple slices (½ cup)
Milk* (1 cup)

DINNER

Tossed salad (1 cup) with yogurt-buttermilk dressing* (1 tbsp)
Broiled, savory chicken breast (3 oz)
Herbed brown rice (½ cup)
Steamed broccoli* (1 cup) with cheese sauce*
Whole-grain roll (1) topped with margarine (2 tsp)
Low-fat frozen strawberry yogurt* (½ cup)
Cafe latte*

* Good source of calcium.

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Food Categories	Foods Recommended	Tips
BREADS, CEREALS, RICE, AND PASTA 6–11 servings each day		
Serving size = 1 slice bread, 1 oz ready-to-eat cereal, ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta; ½ bun, bagel, or English muffin; 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin; 3–4 small or 2 large crackers; 1 6-inch tortilla	All In particular: calcium-fortified cereals and breads, waffles, pancakes, and cornbread	For added calcium, top crunchy breakfast cereals with creamy yogurt. Spread bagels with ricotta cheese mixed with honey. Use milk instead of water to prepare oatmeal. Sprinkle grated Parmesan or Romano cheese on hot pasta dishes.
VEGETABLES 3–5 servings each day		
Serving size = ½ cup cooked or chopped raw, 1 cup raw leafy, ¾ cup juice	All In particular: bok choy, broccoli, collards, kale, mustard greens, spinach, and turnip greens	Top a steaming baked potato with plain yogurt and chives. Puree cottage cheese and fresh herbs in the blender, and use as a quick dip for broccoli and other vegetables. Toss grated cheese into salads. Serve steamed broccoli, cauliflower, or asparagus with a creamy cheese sauce.
FRUITS 2–4 servings each day		
Serving size = 1 medium, ¼ melon wedge, ½ cup chopped, cooked, or canned, ¾ cup juice, ¼ cup dried	All In particular: calcium-fortified juices	Fruits provide very little calcium, but are an important part of a healthful diet. Boost calcium by mixing fresh berries and plain or vanilla yogurt in a blender for a refreshing drink. Top frozen yogurt or ice cream with your favorite fruit.
MILK, YOGURT, AND CHEESE 2–3 servings each day		
Serving size = 1 cup milk or yogurt, 1½ oz natural cheese, 2 oz processed cheese	All types of milk—fat-free, low-fat, whole, and buttermilk Nonfat and low-fat yogurt All varieties of cheese Cottage cheese, pudding, custard, ice cream, and frozen yogurt	Milk and dairy products are good sources of calcium. Select at least three servings from this group every day. Add 1–2 teaspoons of fat-free milk powder to milk, yogurt, puddings, or cream soup to boost calcium.
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, DRIED BEANS AND PEAS, EGGS, AND NUTS 2–3 servings or total of 6 oz daily		
Serving size = 2–3 oz cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; count 1 egg, ½ cup cooked dried beans, 2 tbsp peanut butter, or ½ cup nuts as 1 oz of meat	All In particular: canned salmon and sardines with bones, beans (dried and cooked), tofu or soybean curd (prepared with calcium), and almonds	Add calcium by blending shredded cheese into casseroles and meatloaf, or use it as a topper for stew. Many combination dishes are excellent sources of calcium, such as pizza, lasagna, tacos, and macaroni and cheese.
FATS, SNACKS, SWEETS, CONDIMENTS, AND BEVERAGES Use sparingly		
	Blackstrap molasses	In salad dressings and sandwich spreads, use plain yogurt in place of some or all of the mayonnaise. Top waffles or pancakes with fruit and a dollop of yogurt in place of syrup. Make a quick latte by blending coffee with an equal amount of steamed milk.