

Cool Calcium

Calcium is an essential mineral that your body uses for many functions. Calcium doesn't just keep your bones and teeth strong, it also helps muscles, nerves and blood function well in the body. Most people think that they are getting enough calcium in their daily diet, but the truth is most people are not. When people do not take in enough calcium in their diet, the body borrows calcium from the bones to use in other ways. This results in the weakening of the bones that is difficult to reverse. Although everyone needs adequate calcium in their diet, the most important time to ensure ample calcium intake is during stages of growth including childhood and adolescence. Bones do most of their building by the age of 17, creating a strong foundation for adulthood.



The Basics:

- More than one in 10 Americans either has, or is at risk of developing, osteoporosis or other bone diseases.
- More than 75% of Americans are calcium deficient.
- The body needs enough calcium, vitamin D, phosphates and magnesium to build strong bones.
- Our calcium needs change as we age:

Age	Recommended Calcium Intake / Day
1-3 years	500 mg
4-8 years	800 mg
9-18 years	1300 mg



Getting Started:

- The Food Label can help you figure out how much calcium is in your favorite foods. Calcium is shown as a % daily value based on a total of 1000 mg.
 - If a food provides 30% of your calcium needs, it has 300 mg of calcium/serving.
- One serving of food from the milk group has about 300 mg of calcium. This translates to 2 ½ cups of milk per day for your five year old child.
- Calcium can also be found in other foods including:
 - Dark leafy green vegetables (1 cup = 90 mg of calcium)
 - Soybeans (1 cup = 180 mg)
 - Tofu processed with calcium (1/2 cup = 260 mg)
 - Orange juice and other fortified foods (1 cup = 300 mg)
- Encourage snacks and meals that incorporate calcium into your child's diet.
- Supplement your child's diet with additional calcium when necessary.
 - Take a supplement that contains Calcium and Vitamin D
 - Adolescents and Adults may take 1,000 mg of Calcium + Vitamin D each day.

